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Dmitry Khmelnitsky. Stalin's only defeat

Why did the regular Red Army die in the summer of 1941?

At home, two old newspapers hang on the wall under glass. Both are dedicated to old, but joyful events. "Krasnaya Gazeta" dated January 24, 1924 reports on the delivery of the body of the deceased Lenin to Moscow from Gorki and on the worldwide grief over this occasion. In Trud of March 10, 1953, a photograph of Stalin's funeral and Malenkov's mourning speech were published on the first page. In front of the entrance to the mausoleum is a giant coffin, like for Gulliver. On the podium of the mausoleum are all the main communists of the world, thirty people - small, but recognizable. Khrushchev and Malenkov are in the middle. Near Beria and Zhou Enlai. On the left flank, Dolores Ibarruri is

wrapped in a handkerchief. In post-Soviet Russia, the anniversaries of Lenin and Stalin pass completely unnoticed. Both are very lucky. The ironic indifference with which we, former Soviet people, vainly remember the names of the leaders is the best and completely undeserved reward for great people.

They have always been lucky. It was possible to put together a party of a completely new type. Managed to seize power. I managed to die my own death. Even if Ilyich was upset before his death, these griefs cannot be compared with the dying grief of his faithful comrades-in-arms. Zinoviev and Kamenev were more upset. The cult of Ilyich, rehearsed by Vissarionovich in his own interests, survived the cult of Stalin himself and will live for a long time to come. The image of a wise, intelligent, decisive and humane leader exists on its own, regardless of the terrible realities of the era, about which even in Russia you can read legally. Stalin did Ilyich a service that he did not intend to render. The spirit of Lenin was called upon to hold a halo over the head of Stalin himself. The head turned black and fell off, but the spirit remained and looks quite idyllic against the background of Stalin's personality and his era. The pre-revolutionary background, natural for Ilyich, had gone into oblivion so long ago and firmly that it seemed that it had never existed.

He disappeared along with the people for whom it was Lenin who was the main ghoul who spoiled a completely decent country. The Soviet thaw began with a

“return to Leninist norms”, with the ingenuous Yevtushenko, with “...get Lenin out of the money!” The thaw began with the sweet horror of realizing the similarities between Hitler's and Stalin's regimes. The process of awareness dragged on for fifty years and still has not reached its climax, although along the way, not only a handful of renegades, but the entire Soviet people turned into emigrants, and the Great Motherland ended in self-annihilation. It will probably take before the hell of a time to realize the deep dissimilarity between Hitler and Stalin and to see much closer parallels between Lenin and Hitler. There is a simple psychological test for identifying the ability for abstract thinking - to exclude the dissimilar from several figures. In a group of three leaders - Lenin, Stalin, Hitler - it is Stalin who stands apart. Stalin's psychology is a mystery, a black box of Soviet history.

His views, goals and tastes have not yet been deciphered. In terms of the totality of terror and the well-functioning of the state system he invented, he far outstripped his own.

colleagues.

Compared to Stalin, Lenin and Hitler are simple and clear as a tear. Both are political idealists who invented an idea and faithfully served it (it's ridiculous to talk about the ideas that guided Stalin. He could turn anyone inside out). Both came out of the medium intellectual environment by self-education. Self-education brought both to a complete break with the environment and its values. Both were And actively were engaged charismatic leaders, surrounded by associates and like-minded people (Stalin was surrounded only by sycophants). Both were respected and loved by their party comrades. Their power—at least in this circle—was based on respect, not fear. His comrades-in-arms also loved Stalin, but it was mortally dangerous not to love him. Hitler would hardly have kept Goebbels' love if he had arrested his wife. Stalin did this repeatedly.

Both were socialists. Both dreamed of the reorganization of the world and the happiness of mankind. Both intended to withdraw from the happy humanity some groups unworthy of happiness - one of the "class enemies", the other - "racial". Both received power in

democratic countries and turned them into totalitarian and one-party. Lenin, however, did this by much more brutal means than Hitler. But his situation was more complicated - he had to fight. Therefore, the role of the Cheka-OGPU in Soviet Russia was immeasurably higher than the role of the Gestapo in the Third Reich. After seizing power, Lenin inflicted terror in his own country on such a scale that Hitler decided only during the war and only on foreign territory. Lenin and Hitler destroyed approximately the same number of people - 7-10 million (Stalin is several times more). Crazy utopian ideas were behind the terror of Lenin and Hitler. Their implementation often contradicted the practical benefits of the regime, put it on the verge of collapse. Lenin managed to avoid collapse, Hitler did not. Stalin's terror, on the contrary, was due to practical, administrative and economic considerations. It has always only benefited - not for the population, of course, but for the regime. Hitler and Lenin were honest people in their own way - they wrote what they thought. The most brutal orders were given by both of them, of course, secretly, but they did not particularly hide their strategic intentions and goals.

The ingenious mystifier and absolute cynic Stalin looks against their background as an alien from another world. The historical injustice lies in the fact that the posthumous fate of all three developed differently. Hitler looks like the only embodiment of absolute evil in the eyes of all mankind, including the Soviet people, who, it would seem, suffered the most from the activities of the troika. Discussions are ongoing about Stalin, his policies, goals and personal qualities even decades after the release of The Gulag Archipelago. If there is any consensus on the issue of Stalin's intra-Soviet crimes, and practically no one questions the existence of the GULAG, then the role of Stalin and the USSR in World War II is still a topic for fierce historical and ideological disputes. Moreover, the myths about the peacekeeping and anti-fascist role of the USSR, which are expelled with great difficulty not only from Soviet, but also from Western historical science, were once invented by Stalin himself. But they survived him for a long time.

Part of the blame for this lies with the Nuremberg Trials. For all its merits, it turned out to be a farce in one serious respect: Nazi war criminals were tried in an international tribunal by Soviet war criminals. Rudenko, who accused Kaltenbrunner, just like Stalin, who accused Hitler, was an outrage against the idea of a tribunal, which all the participants could not but be aware of. Some with a sense of powerlessness, others with gloating. It took half a century for the public (European, but not yet Soviet) to finally ask the question: is Stalin really better than Hitler or is he just as bad? And Lenin? He's not here at all. Everything was a long time ago and not true. The cult of Lenin, overgrown with good-natured anecdotes, turned into a cult of a ritual graphic symbol with a bald head and a beard, which, in contrast to Hitler's mustaches, does not evoke positively any feelings in the public. The image of Lenin was replaced by the image of his mummy with a difficult fate. The funniest issue in Russian politics is

whether she should be buried or left lying

exhibit.

It's probably all right. It is very difficult to connect the orders for the mass executions of hostages with the young blond boy on the October star and the elderly sage from Brodsky's paintings, whom he has known all his life. Not everyone succeeds.

There is a certain situational-psychological similarity between the conflict between Lenin and Stalin in the last years of Lenin's life and the conflict between Stalin and Hitler, which also ended in the death of the latter. Both Lenin and Hitler catastrophically misjudged a man whom both - one for a long time and the other for a short one -

considered their ally.

* * *

The defeat of the Red Army in the summer of 1941 is the most, and probably the only, unexpected event in Stalin's history. This is the only obvious defeat of Stalin, the violation of his

plans. Everything else always went according to plans, or at least logically followed from other actions of the Soviet government.

Until 1941 and after 1945, all the troubles, misfortunes and difficulties of the Soviet population were inspired from within the country, by its own leadership. Therefore, all other troubles of Soviet history (also with millions of corpses - collectivization, industrialization, police terror) have always been presented by state-owned Soviet historiography either as victories and achievements, or as due to temporary insurmountable circumstances. In extreme cases, as errors and deviations course. And only the official defeats of the summer of 1941 remained in the minds of the Soviet people as a catastrophe, the evil intent of an insidious enemy. In fact, the victims then (and later, during the war) suffered were the only ones in the entire Soviet history that were officially recognized as victims in the Soviet era. For a very simple reason - they were easy to attribute to the enemy.

And the answer to the question about the reasons for the military defeat of the forty-first year always seemed quite obvious: the enemy treacherously attacked the defenseless, unprepared to fight and unsuspecting Soviet state. Hence the millions of losses at the first moment, and the most difficult three-year extrusion of the Wehrmacht outside the USSR.

This is an answer that is obvious to Soviet people who have been weaned from thinking about official formulations, and completely unsatisfactory for those who have not lost the ability to think.

I believe that the death of the entire personnel of the Red Army was not due to the unpreparedness of the USSR for war, but for the exact opposite reason. The Stalinist USSR prepared too well

for war. As a matter of fact, the Soviet people did nothing else for a decade and a half before the war. Although not everyone suspected it. The USSR was preparing for war, forgetting everything else, and besides, by the time of the German attack, it had been participating in it for a year and a half - on a par with Hitler and as an aggressor. That's what neither the Soviet people nor Stalin himself were completely ready for, so this is the role of victims of aggression. Actually, it's worth clarifying the terminology here. Expressions like "the USSR was preparing" or "not preparing for war", "the USSR believed

I hoped, counted..." are incorrect in essence. The USSR of the thirties is Stalin and no one else. Even Molotov and Kaganovich were only performers. Extras, but not players. Extras Stalin changed, frightened, flogged, exalted, used, killed, imprisoned and freed, but only he made decisions. Just as soon as he himself set key tasks and defined goals. The structure of power built by Stalin by the beginning of the thirties ruled out even the minimum intra-party collegiality, even at the level of the Politburo. Therefore, the plans and policies of the

USSR of that time are the plans and policies of Stalin. Stalin very succinctly expressed the principle of his foreign policy in a letter to Molotov and Kaganovich dated September 2, 1935: *"Kalinin said that the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs doubted the admissibility of exporting grain and other products from the USSR to Italy in view of the conflict in Abyssinia. I think that the Narkomindel's doubts stem from a misunderstanding of the international situation. The conflict is not so much between Italy and Abyssinia, but between Italy and France on the one hand and England on the other. The old Entente is no more. Instead, two ententes are formed: the entente of Italy and France on the one hand, and the entente of England and Germany on the other. The stronger the fight between them, the better for the USSR. We can sell bread to both so that they can*

fight. It is not at all profitable for us that one of them immediately smashed the other. It is beneficial for us that their fight last as long as possible, but without an early victory of one over the other . 176), wait until they weaken, and then attack. This was precisely the essence of the foreign policy of the USSR in the thirties. Earlier and later, too, but only in the thirties, the chances of achieving

these goals became disastrously large. In Stalin's speech on August 19, 1939, the summary of which was published in November 1939 by the Gavasa agency and later found in the Russian archives by Tatyana

Bushuyeva, in other words, the same goals were declared. Here is a

“... If we conclude an agreement on mutual assistance with France and Great Britain, Germany will abandon Poland and begin to seek a “modus vivendi” with the Western powers. War will be prevented, but in the future events may take on a dangerous character for the USSR. If we accept Germany's offer to conclude a non-aggression pact with her, she will, of course, attack Poland, and the intervention of France and England in this war will become inevitable. Western Europe will be subjected to serious unrest and unrest. Under these conditions, we will have many chances to stay out of the conflict, and we will be able to hope for our advantageous entry into the war. The experience of the last

twenty years shows that in peacetime it is impossible to have a communist movement in Europe strong enough to enable the Bolshevik Party to seize power. The dictatorship of this party becomes possible only as a result of a great war. We will make our choice, and it is clear. We must accept the German offer and politely send back the Anglo-French mission. The first advantage that we will extract will be the destruction of Poland to the very approaches to Warsaw, including Ukrainian Galicia At the same time, we must foresee the consequences that will flow from both the defeat and the victory of Germany. In the event of its defeat, the Sovietization of Germany will inevitably occur and a communist government will be created. We must not forget that a Sovietized Germany will be in great danger if this Sovietization is the consequence of Germany's defeat in a fleeting war. England and France will still be strong enough to capture Berlin and destroy Soviet Germany. And we will not be able to come to the aid of our Bolshevik comrades in Germany. Thus, our task is to ensure that Germany can continue the war as long as possible, with the goal that England and France, tired and exhausted to such a degree, would not be able to defeat

the Sovietized Germany. Adhering to a position of neutrality and waiting in the wings, the USSR will provide assistance to today's Germany, supply it with raw materials and food products ... To implement these plans, it is necessary that the war

lasted as long as possible, and it is in this direction that all the forces that we have in Western Europe and the Balkans should be directed ... Comrades! It is in the interests of the USSR, the motherland of the working people, that a war breaks out between the Reich and the capitalist Anglo-French bloc. Everything must be done to make this war last as long as possible in order to exhaust the two sides. It is for this reason that we must agree to the conclusion of the pact proposed by Germany and work to ensure that this war, once declared, lasts for the maximum amount of time.

[\[177\]](#).

There is still a very heated discussion around the presentation of this speech. Not all researchers believe in their authenticity, since no other documents irrefutably confirming that the August 19 speech took place have yet been found. There are two versions - either this speech was actually delivered, or someone who was aware of Stalin's plans and the discussions taking place in the Kremlin elite modeled it. The latter is highly improbable—there is too much evidence [\[178\]](#) for the veracity of the presentation of the speech—but even if it is not, there is no doubt that Stalin's political aims are stated in the alleged forgery perfectly adequate to reality. It could only be done by an extremely knowledgeable person. There is no evidence that Stalin could have other goals and other plans. All the actions of the Soviet Union after August 19, 1941 (and before - too) fit perfectly into the concept set forth in the speech recordings. It is worth paying attention to the phrase: *“... If we conclude an agreement on mutual assistance with France and Great*

Britain, Germany will abandon Poland and begin to seek a “modus vivendi” with the Western powers. The war will be prevented, but in the future events may take on a dangerous character for the USSR. What could be the danger for the USSR? We are not talking about a military

danger from the outside, since "war will be prevented." And hunters of good will to attack the USSR in pre-war Europe were not observed in any way. In the 20s, the Soviet leadership played with the thesis that Poland was sleeping and seeing how to attack the Soviet Union in the early thirties as "probable opponents"

a fantastic coalition of all the western neighbors of the USSR was considered, but all this was not even nonsense, but an ideological veil that masked their own plans for a war against all their neighbors. The USSR chose its probable opponents for itself, and the degree of probability depended not on their plans, but on the

Soviet ones. Based on Stalinist logic, the danger for the USSR consisted in the IMPOSSIBILITY to unleash a world war in such a way as to enter it after all the other participants had exhausted their forces. That is, it was an ideological danger. This situation could develop into a real military danger only if the USSR nevertheless decided to attack peaceful Europe, and, consequently, immediately united against it. The main danger to the future

of the USSR, according to Stalin, was the prevention of war. It was in order to prevent this danger that Stalin agreed to conclude an agreement with Hitler. The treaty, which provided for the start of a world war, pushed Germany against a coalition of Western states, unleashed the hands of Stalin in Eastern Europe, closed Soviet borders with German ones, and created a real and desirable opportunity for Stalin to intervene in a world war at the right time as an "arbiter". In other words, the only winner. The "Sovietization" of Germany was programmed by Stalin in the Molotov Ribbentrop Pact from the very beginning. Moreover, it is interesting that, first of all, the "Sovietization" of Germany was planned in the event of Germany's defeat in the war with England and France. This could mean only one thing: at the moment when the German troops are defeated in the west, the USSR enters German territory from the east and goes further west as an ally of "Sovietized Germany". It is difficult to envy the role that Hitler was destined for in this scenario.

Thus, one of the main reasons for the military defeats of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 was the Stalinist foreign policy strategy as a whole. If it were not for the permanent focus of the USSR on inciting a world war, the war would simply not start. The turning point of this strategy came exactly on August 19, 1939, if we proceed from the fact that Stalin really decided on that day to conclude a pact with Hitler and opened his cards to his comrades-in-arms.

Everything depended only on Stalin. If he had not concluded a pact, the war would have been prevented, the borders would have remained in their original places, and a clash between Germany and the USSR would have been physically impossible.

Hitler, for all his military ambitions, was a dependent figure in this alliance. If Stalin refuses to conclude an agreement and if he concludes an agreement on cooperation with the British and French, then that's it - that was the end of Hitler's freedom of action, and dreams of expanding living space in any direction continued to remain dreams. The pact opened the way for Hitler to Poland and, most importantly, to the West. However, there is no reason to believe that Hitler was so eager in 1939 for an immediate all-European war - the declaration of war by the Western allies shocked him greatly. But there is no doubt about Stalin. Strived, and how.

However, when concluding the pact, a real danger arose, which Stalin should have taken into account - Hitler could realize that his plans for the future of Europe differ from Stalin's plans. And to figure out what fate Stalin is preparing for Germany, Europe and him personally. But the situation in which Hitler found himself (and found himself), realizing after getting bogged down in the European war that the threat from the East, earlier, before the pact, was perceived throughout Europe rather as hypothetical and abstract, suddenly became completely real, did not leave him too much options for action. Strictly speaking, at that moment there was only one option left - the second front in the east.

Disputes about the causes of the German-Soviet war of 1941, as a rule, are especially tense, even hysterical, by discussing the topic of "prevention". Thanks to it, a purely academic, historical problem acquires an acute ideological significance. To agree that Hitler attacked the USSR was forced, for many participants in even quite serious scientific discussions, means to justify Hitler. Which is strange. As if, after what Hitler had already managed to do by the summer of 1941, he can be justified by the fact that the attack on Stalin was forced. Hitler's reputation does not depend at all on whether he attacked preemptively or not. But the reputation of Stalin (and the USSR) depends on this very much. In the case of proven preventiveness, the USSR is the aggressor who was outstripped. Prevention has not been proven - the USSR is a pure victim.

This topic has been sufficiently studied by many quite conscientious researchers. The picture emerges like this. Soon, in the coming weeks, Hitler did not expect an attack on Germany in June 1941, although it was absolutely real, which was repeatedly proven by both Russian and Western historians. German intelligence had a very incomplete idea of the state of the Red Army's deployment. The picture of what was happening in the three hundred-kilometer border zone was more or less clear, but the Germans did not imagine the entire military potential of the Red Army, did not know about the second and third strategic echelons. Giving the order to prepare for Operation Barbarossa, Hitler did not expect an imminent strike by the Red Army,

although as the date of his own attack approached, the concern of the German military leadership about what was happening in the Soviet border zone grew all the time. The fact that the USSR, in principle, represents an open military threat to Germany, and its appetites go far beyond the framework stipulated

by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, was completely clear to the German leadership at least since the summer of 1940. Stalin could attack in six months, in a year or two, it still made the situation unbearable for Hitler, because it paralyzed his actions. Hitler could not end the war in the West without using one and a half hundred divisions stationed on the eastern border. And he could not take them away, because Stalin's aggressive intentions were obvious. The stalemate, too, could not last too long, as it only led to a worsening of Germany's strategic position. Stalin could wait, but Hitler could not. In this situation, Hitler decided to cut the Gordian knot and, having defeated the Red Army, untie his hands in the West. The ideological plans for the expansion of "living space" to the east played a minor role in this situation, if they played at all. Goebbels wrote about this quite clearly in his diary on June 16, 1941. Propaganda in diary entries, of course, and

does not smell...

"The Fuhrer explains the situation to me in detail: the attack on Russia will begin when our deployment is over. This will happen within a week.... Russians have accumulated right on the border,

this is the best thing that could happen for us. If they, dispersed, retreat into the interior of the country, they will be in great danger. They have 180-200 divisions, perhaps even less, in any case, approximately as many as we have. In personnel and technical terms, they cannot even be compared with us ... The Fuhrer estimates the duration of the action at 4 months, I estimate it at a shorter time. Bolshevism will crumble like a house of cards... We must act. Moscow wants to stay out of the war until Europe gets tired and bleeds out. Then Stalin will want to act, to Bolshevize Europe and take power. These calculations will be crossed out. Our action is prepared as well as humanly possible. So many reserves have been prepared that failure is simply excluded. The promotion is not limited geographically. The struggle will continue until the Russian troops cease to exist... Russia will attack us if we weaken, and then we will have a war on two fronts, which we prevent by this preventive action. Only then will we have a free rear...

We must also attack Russia to free the people. An undefeated Russia ties up the 150 divisions we urgently need for the war effort. It must be strengthened in order to implement programs for the production of weapons, submarines and aircraft, then the United States will not be able to do anything to us. We have materials, raw materials and machines for three-shift work, but not enough people. If Russia is defeated, we will be able to free up entire draft years and build, arm, and prepare. Only then will it be possible to start an air war with England on a different level. The invasion is still unlikely. So, it's about guaranteeing victory in some other way.... The trend of the whole campaign lies in the palm of your

hand: Bolshevism must fall, and England will have the last weapon on the continent knocked out of her hands. Bolshevik poison will be expelled from Europe. Even Churchill and Roosevelt have little to say against this. Tsarism will not be restored in Russia, but Jewish Bolshevism will be replaced by real socialism ... Cooperation with Russia was

stain on our uniform. It will now be washed away. What we have been fighting against all our lives will now be destroyed.” [179].

A week earlier, on June 8, Goebbels writes: “Received the program for the territorial division of R[russia]. A very large apparatus is required. We are not talking about the Asian part of R.. You will only have to take care of the European one. Stalin recently told Matsuoka that he was an Asian. Well, please!” [180].

And here is an excerpt from the entry dated June 14, 1941: “The Russians do not seem to suspect anything. In any case, they deploy in the way we can only wish: very crowded, easy *prey*. First, it — ..

shows how wrong the Nazi leadership was about the scale of Soviet military preparations. Goebbels and Hitler counted on 180-200 Soviet divisions (or less), in reality there were more than 250 of them only in the first two strategic echelons. Secondly, the concentration of Soviet troops on the border is not considered as an indication

of an imminent attack. They did not expect him, but they were glad that the crowded Soviet troops would become easy prey. As it happened, by the way. Thirdly, the Nazi leadership has no doubts about the strategic threat posed by

Stalin and the Red Army. Stalin will attack as soon as he gets a favorable opportunity to do so. Therefore, it is by no means possible to remove troops from the eastern border.

Fourthly, the motive for the attack is clearly indicated - a preventive action aimed at removing the threat from the East in order to successfully end the war with England. Moreover, this action is not considered as a war on two fronts, on the contrary, it should prevent one. Indeed, at that moment the Wehrmacht was not conducting hostilities on land. But any activation on the western front, using forces redeployed from the east, automatically meant an attack by Stalin on a weakened sector and the opening of a second front under extremely unfavorable circumstances. That is, the main goal of the German attack on the USSR is the successful completion of the war with England. And the conquest of "living space" in the east and the elimination of Bolshevism is a secondary goal and does not determine the strategy. In the notes of Goebbels

there is not a word about the seizure of land in the East as the main goal of the German-Soviet war. And there is nothing about the fight against the "lower races" as the driving force behind the eastern campaign. Ideology did not play any role at all in the decision to fight the USSR. Germany's appetites extend only to the European part of the USSR, and only out of necessity. Since Stalin is an "Asiatic", let him sit out in Asia. At that

moment, Hitler did not need any "living space", Germany in 1941 already had it in abundance. Much more than physical opportunities to master, pacify and control the captured half of Europe.

Thus, the specific reason for the defeats of the Red Army in the summer of 1941 is an error in

calculations. If the end of the deployment of the Red Army for the attack had been planned not for mid-July, but a month earlier, the Wehrmacht could have expected the same terrible defeat. Apparently, as some researchers believe, for example, the Austrian historian Heinz Magenheimer, the Soviet leadership did not expect Hitler to attack suddenly and so soon. It was assumed that diplomatic demarches, ultimatums, political demands and etc.

Goebbels details in his diary in May-June 1941 the camouflage efforts made by Germany, and in particular by his department, to give the USSR the impression that Germany was ready for negotiations. Hence, probably, Stalin's disregard for warnings about the outbreak of war. There were only a few weeks left before the end of preparations for the attack, he expected to hold out. And even then the German preparations ceased to play any role whatsoever. In the same way, on June 22, 1941, all the long-term efforts of the USSR to prepare their own attack on Europe instantly depreciated.

In fact, both sides, preparing to attack each other in the spring of 1941, made the same mistake. Both underestimated the danger of an enemy attack in the short term, and both counted on the complete success of their own military preparations. Both were preparing to make the same maneuver with the same goals. None of them prepared for defense.

Due to a combination of random circumstances, and not at all military tactical insight, Hitler managed to get ahead of Stalin. But it could also be the other way around. And then today Hitler's mistakes that led to the defeat of the Wehrmacht in July 1941 would be discussed.

So, both sides were preparing to attack, both saw the threatening military preparations of the enemy, and both did not expect the enemy to attack in the very near future. It makes sense to raise the question of the "prevention" of Germany's attack on the USSR in a slightly different way. Namely: did the partners under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, concluding it in August 1939, intend to violate this pact voluntarily, without pressure from external circumstances in the foreseeable future? Or were they going to comply? There is no doubt about Stalin. He was not just going to break the pact, for him

the agreement with Hitler was a step towards achieving a goal that completely contradicted the essence of the pact: Stalin was not going to share Europe with anyone. There is plenty of evidence for this. Conversely, there is no indication that Stalin's (and the USSR's) strategic plans could have been different. All military planning of the USSR since the late 1920s. (and before too) was aimed at one day being able to defeat the armies of all [\[182\]](#) European countries combined. In the complete absence of a real threat from the European neighbors, not provoked by their own actions. This raises a natural and important question for the topic under discussion: when did the USSR begin to prepare an attack on Germany? Purposeful preparations for an attack on Europe (and on Germany, of course) began in the Soviet Union long

before Hitler decided to develop Operation Barbarossa in 1940. And long before Hitler came to power. American John Scott spent five years at industrial construction sites in the Urals. In a book published in Stockholm in 1944, he wrote: *"In 1940, Winston Churchill announced to the English people that they had nothing to look forward to but blood, sweat and tears. A country*

is at war. [...] However, the Soviet Union had already been in a state of war since 1931, and its people came out with sweat, blood and tears. People were wounded and killed, women and children froze to death, millions died of starvation, thousands fell under military courts and were shot in the military campaign for collectivization and industrialization. I'm willing to bet that in Russia the struggle for the production of iron and steel led to more losses than the Battle of the Marne in the First World War. During all the thirties, the Russian people waged a war - an industrial war " [183] It was ..

an industrial war, which was supposed to bring the real war closer. All the terrible events of Stalin's history that we are accustomed to perceive separately - collectivization, industrialization, various waves of repression - were elements of the implementation of one global plan to turn the USSR into a military camp, and the population partly into soldiers, partly into slaves. Which, in fact, in the Stalinist situation is one and the same thing. The ideological cover for all

these events was a bluff. Collectivization was not conditioned by any class struggle in the countryside. Industrialization did not aim at the economic rise of the country. And even political repressions were not political. Political opponents of Soviet power were destroyed or completely paralyzed as early as the 1920s. Anti-Stalinist sentiments could be suppressed in the 1930s by repressions many orders of magnitude smaller than those that took place.

All Stalin's actions and reforms, called political, were in fact purely economic in nature. It was a process of militarization of the country in the Stalinist way. It was necessary to

build military factories in the shortest possible time, providing weapons for the most powerful army in the world. This required a) funds, b) modern technologies, c) cheap, and even better - free labor, d) a social structure that allows the country's leadership to manipulate without restrictions all the country's resources - food, raw materials, industrial products, labor. All these tasks were solved in parallel. The main goal of Soviet industrialization was the construction of a military-industrial complex by reducing the standard of living to a physically possible minimum.

population. This was the goal, directly opposite to what is called the development of the economy. Normal economic growth usually means an increase in the well-being of citizens, an increase in the comfort of life. The Stalinist military industry was created by destroying, liquidating the civilian economy and reducing the standard of living of the population.

Military-industrial technology had to be purchased in the West, there was no one of our own. This process began in 1927–1928. In 1929 - a huge success. American architect Albert Kahn receives an order from the USSR to design hundreds of industrial enterprises for a total of \$2 billion. Thanks to contacts with Kahn and other Western firms, a stream of military-industrial technology, machine tools, and all kinds of equipment began to flow into the USSR. Towards was a stream of bread, all other food and

wood. There was nowhere else for the USSR to get the currency. Both streams culminated in 1932–1933; as a result, it was during these years that the peak of mass starvation in the country with many millions of victims fell. Collectivization was a means of pumping food out of the countryside and pumping the "surplus" enslaved peasant population into labor force at the construction sites of the five-year plan. New enterprises were built close to sources of raw materials, where it was impossible to find voluntary workers at all. And tens of millions were required, and free of charge. This problem was solved in several ways. The same collectivization; squeezing out the "superfluous" population, useless from the point of view of the state Stalinist tasks, from the cities with the help of such measures as the introduction of the passport system; successive waves of repression. In parallel, the social structure of society was changing. Remains of economic and civil liberties were expelled from it. In its ideal form, the Stalinist system of the state structure of the USSR, built by 1931–1932, was a concentration camp in which the GULAG itself served as a punishment cell. Those who remained at large had more privileges and better provision than prisoners, but no more civil rights. Even the Stalinist commissars.

The people who survived these times in the Soviet Union left practically no memoirs. But in Europe, and especially in Germany, hundreds of books about life in the USSR were published in the 1930s. Most of the authors are foreign workers, engineers, former communists who lived and worked in the USSR, or journalists who traveled to the USSR as tourists. For Nazi propaganda, which published such books in gigantic editions, they were a gift. Which, however, does not mean that they were not true. Yes, and it would be ridiculous to slander the Stalinist USSR, the reality was worse than any fantasy. Here is one example. In the spring of

1932, a young German architect Rudolf Wolter came to Novosibirsk as a "foreign specialist". After a year of work, he returned home and, shocked by what he saw, published the book "Specialist in Siberia" [184]. Voltaire described with great sympathy a strange society, consisting, as it were, of some infantile teenagers. Something like a well-organized boarding school for children with retarded development. Members of this community are deprived of free will, freedom of choice, self-esteem and do not seem to understand what it is. They experience constant horror of the secret police and fear of the authorities, embodied in three guises - the party organizer-trade union director. The bosses consist of the same teenagers, only invested with trust. They live in terrible conditions, but at the same time they think that life is worse in the West. They cannot change their place of work and place of residence, at any moment they can be deprived of a bread card (at the beginning of 1933 - 400 grams of bread per day for a worker). At the same time, they are confident that they are building socialism and are looking forward to the day the five-year plan ends, because they were promised that at that very moment the standard of living would triple. After all, they wrote about it in the newspapers!

With sad irony, Voltaire recalls the advice he constantly heard from his interlocutors: "You must read the newspapers. What you see with your own eyes gives you the wrong impression of our system!" And an anecdote on the same topic: the teacher tells the class that a new factory has been built on Tverskaya Street. Student: "I live opposite, there has been only one for five years."

fence". Teacher: "Fool, read the newspapers, it's written there in black and white."

By 1932, Stalin had already fashioned a society that was ready to perceive reality not with its own senses, but through newspapers - in black and white. And he came up with all the necessary myths for him - black and white. The leader was a brilliant director and psychologist. He gave people fooled to the point of idiocy the most important thing - a sense of their value, necessity and nobility. The society united by Stalinist myths managed to outlive the leader himself, his image, and the formal change of the state system.

The goal of all Stalin's measures from the very beginning of his reign, from 1927, was the same - the speedy construction of a very strong army and the unleashing of a world war. The last goal was reached in 1939. And by 1941, Stalin had an army that was incommensurable in number and technical power with any other army in Europe. Concluding a pact with Hitler in 1939, Stalin was by no means going to stop there.

And was Hitler going to conclude the pact in August 1939, in the near future to break it? The agreement with Stalin opened the way for Hitler to the West and guaranteed (or was supposed to guarantee) a secure rear. If already in 1939 he was planning to simultaneously (or sequentially) capture both Western Europe and the Soviet Union, this means that even then he was actually preparing a war on two fronts. And he intended to deceive Stalin in the same way that Stalin (which is undoubtedly proven) intended to deceive Hitler.

If, however, Hitler did not have such plans in 1939, and he entered into a pact in earnest, with the intention of observing it, then this means that the attack on the USSR was forced, that is, preventive.

There could be a third option: in 1939 he was not going to, and then, under the influence of victories in the West, the appetite broke out ... But this option is unequivocally unprovable. The unfinished and unpromising war with England and the real prospect of a war with those looming behind England on

the Atlantic horizon, the United States in 1941 did not give reason for special optimism and rapture with victories, no matter how spectacular they did not seem.

It seems that no data has been published indicating that until the summer of 1940, that is, before Stalin annexed part of Romania, Hitler planned to launch an eastern campaign and, moreover, in the very near future. In confirmation of this

version, only one phrase "Mein Kampf" is always quoted: *"When we talk about the conquest of new lands in Europe, we, of course, can have in mind, first of all, only Russia and those border states that are subordinate to it."* [185]

To the obvious question, why would Hitler, who had captured half of Europe by 1941, but never completely won the war in the West, moreover, did not have obvious chances to win and develop the already occupied territories in the foreseeable future, would need to violate the alliance treaty with the USSR and to open a second front in the east - this question is followed by the traditional answer: he himself wrote that he would attack Russia. Here he attacked.

Just this explanation and should not be believed on the move. Because in "Mein Kampf" Hitler wrote not only that. And not even quite that.

Hitler wrote his infamous book in prison in 1923-1924, after the failure of the coup. At that time, he could only dream of the coming victory. Strictly speaking, his book is not propaganda literature, but party theory, which was to form the basis of a mass movement in the future. These are the sincere reflections of a defeated far-right extremist politician at the time about the fate of Germany. He sees the main goal of Germany as abandoning the struggle for colonies in favor of conquering new lands in

Europe: *"Until our state has managed to provide each of its sons with enough land for centuries to come, you should not assume that our position is strong. Never forget that the most sacred right is the right to own enough land that we ourselves will cultivate. Never forget that the most sacred is the blood that we shed in the struggle for the land."*

Hitler plans wars of conquest, but with all his disgust for both the Bolshevik regime and Western democracies, he is driven not by political motives, but by purely mercantile ones - raised, however, to the level of high spiritual values. It is physically impossible for Germany to wage a war of conquest simultaneously in the West and in the East. War is possible only on the condition of an alliance either with the West against the USSR, or with the USSR against the West. Both options are acceptable if they lead to success. Hitler considers options

and speaks in favor of the first one - an alliance with the West against the USSR - for purely practical reasons: *"From a purely military point of view, a war by Germany against Russia against Western Europe (or rather, in this case, against the rest of the world) would be a real disaster for us. After all, the whole struggle would have played out not on Russian, but on German territory, and Germany could not even count on any serious support from Russia ... "[187]*

Russia, according to Hitler, is a weak, poorly armed ally. *"Add to this the fact that between Germany and Russia lies the Polish state, which is wholly in the hands of France. In the event of a war between Germany and Russia against Western Europe, Russia, before sending at least one soldier to the German front, would have to endure a victorious struggle with Poland. In such a war, the matter in general would not be so much in the soldiers,*

how many in technical equipment"

[\[188\]](#).

A military alliance with the USSR threatens Germany, according to Hitler, with a repetition of the First World War. No less dangerous is an alliance with Russia that does not pursue immediate military goals:

"It is usually objected to that an alliance with Russia should not at all mean an immediate war, or that we can properly prepare for such a war in advance. No, it's not! An alliance that does not aim at war is meaningless and useless. Alliances are created only for the purpose of struggle ... One of two things: either the German-Russian coalition would remain only on paper and thereby lose all value and significance for us; or such an alliance would cease to be just a piece of paper and would be realized, and then the rest of the world would inevitably see this as a warning to itself. It is quite naive to think that England

and France in such a case would calmly wait, say, ten years, until the German-Russian alliance makes all the necessary technical preparations for war. No, in that case the storm would break over Germany with incredible speed . — ..

And one more, minor, but important argument: *"The modern rulers of Russia do not at all think about concluding an honest alliance with Germany, and even more so about its implementation, if they concluded"* [\[190\]](#)..

Hitler concludes that an agreement with Russia against the West is senseless and dangerous, and *" ... the only alliance with England and Italy that would be really useful and opening up great prospects for us" [191] . before the war, he believed that Germany would have acted much more correctly if she had abandoned the senseless colonial policy, the creation of a navy and the strengthening of her world trade, she would have entered into an alliance with England against Russia "*

[\[192\]](#)..

So, attempts at conquest in the West are futile due to the lack of a strong ally, and the path to the East is open, since there is a potential strong ally in the West, and Russia is weak.

Summary: *"We want to stop the eternal German drive to the south and west of Europe and definitely point the finger towards the territories located in the east. We are finally breaking with the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-war period and are consciously moving on to a policy of conquering new lands in Europe. When we talk about the conquest of new lands in Europe, we, of course, can have in mind primarily only Russia and those border states that are subordinate to it"* [\[193\]](#) [Considering](#) only the last phrase, — ..

then yes, Soviet historians are right, Hitler himself predicted his attack on Russia. If you know the whole complex of Hitler's reasoning, it turns out that he did not predict anything of the kind. In "Mein Kampf" he justified the need for an alliance with a strong side against a weak one. The choice of an ally was determined not by political or national

sympathies, and his, an ally, military capabilities.

An attack on a strong Russia, not only without the support of the West, but also at war with it, from the point of view of Hitler during the "Main

Kampf is crazy. And history has confirmed the correctness of this assessment. Then what could make him take this step, except despair? It is worth

bearing in mind that Hitler started the Second World War in full accordance with his reasoning from the time of Mein Kampf - he made an alliance with a strong side. Only the balance of power has changed. The Soviet Union turned from a weak country without a single truck of its own into a powerful military force, into a country with a poor and completely disenfranchised population, but armed to the teeth. And the West showed no

desire to support Germany in its aspiration to the East. An alliance with the West against Russia proved impossible, but an alliance with Russia against the West became a seductive reality. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, concluded in 1939, was a direct implementation of Hitler's theoretical developments fifteen years ago. It was an alliance that led to an immediate victorious war for the conquest of living space. Moreover, the issue with Poland was quickly resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties.

The effect of this alliance was beyond anything Hitler could have dreamed of in 1924. In the summer of 1940 he was master of most of Europe. France has been defeated and captured, some of the European countries have been occupied, and some are reliable satellite allies. The living space for the development of its German nation - through the roof.

In the west, still resisting, but blockaded and isolated from the continent, England.

And in the east - Stalin ...

Usually, when they talk about the causes of the Second World War, everything revolves around Hitler's intentions. The intentions and policies of his partner Stalin remain in the background, as if the actions of the USSR were only a mechanical reaction to the actions and plans of Hitler. Hitler offered to conclude a pact - concluded. He suggested dividing Poland and the Baltic States - they divided it. So what is next?

Stalin had, however, his own view of the development of events in Europe. Very similar to Hitler's. Only, unlike Hitler, Stalin did not publish his secret plans in millions of copies. He deceived Hitler, dragged him into the war in Europe, but committed

a serious political mistake that cost him the entire personnel of the Red Army, who died in the summer of 1941. Having

succeeded in concealing in the spring of 1941 the actual scale of Soviet military preparations, Stalin was unable to conceal in the summer and autumn of 1940 the scale and direction of his strategy. He frightened off Hitler and provoked him to attack.

It is believed that Germany attacked the USSR without declaring war. It is not true. At about three o'clock in the morning on June 22, Reich Foreign Minister Ribbentrop summoned the Soviet ambassador Dekanozov to him and read out a note that was in fact a declaration of war. The next morning, the German ambassador von Schulenburg conveyed the same note to Molotov in Moscow. There was never a word about this document in Soviet historiography. Which looked strange. It would seem that aggression is aggression and the fact of the official declaration of war an hour before the attack does not fundamentally change anything.

It is worth, however, to scroll through the text of the note, published in Berlin in 1941 in all European languages, including Russian, as it immediately becomes clear what is happening. Under no circumstances should this document reach the Soviet reader. It openly talked about the secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and its consequences. The existence of this protocol, which referred to the division of spheres of influence between the USSR and Germany, was denied by the Soviet Union until 1989. Then they confessed. But even after perestroika, up to the present time, the content of the "Note of the German Foreign Ministry to the Soviet Government" does not fit well into the official Russian historiography.

As a matter of fact, several documents were published together: "The Führer's Appeal to the German People" and "Note of the German Foreign Ministry to the Soviet Government" with appendices, which included "Report of the German Foreign Ministry on Propaganda and Political Agitation of the Soviet Government" and "Report of the High Command of the German Army to the German government on the concentration

Soviet troops against Germany. In the Proclamation, Hitler explained in a pathetic, understandable language what was officially stated in the note, and detailed information was collected in the appendices about the hostile activities of the USSR towards Germany and military incidents on the joint border. All further quotations are from this, published in 1941,

text.

The note is characteristic in that it is very reminiscent of Soviet declarations after June 22. Typical totalitarian propaganda. That is, everything that is said about the behavior of the enemy is practically pure truth, and what is said about one's own plans and intentions is just as pure a lie. The note lists all Germany's claims against the USSR that accumulated between August 1939 and June 1941. The reason for Germany's attack on the USSR, according to the authors of the note, was the USSR's violation of the friendly pact with Germany. The essence of the pact was to delimit spheres of influence *"by Germany's refusal of any influence on Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Bessarabia, while the regions of the former Polish state up to the Narew-Bug-San line were to be annexed - according to her desire - to Soviet Russia."*

Moscow was charged with "intensive corrupting work in the areas occupied by Germany ... as well as in Norway, Holland and Belgium" and espionage. At the same time, the repatriation of Germans to the territory of the Reich from the occupied regions of Poland and the Baltic states was used in order to force repatriates to espionage. The Germans had ample evidence that in Moscow they looked at Germany as "tomorrow's strong enemy." A document is quoted that was found in the Soviet embassy when Belgrade was occupied by the Germans: *"The USSR will react only at the right moment. The Axis powers have scattered their military forces even further, and therefore the USSR will suddenly attack Germany."* An interesting detail. According to the note,

at the conclusion of the 1939 pact, the Soviet government declared that it *"with the exception of the areas of the former Polish state that were in a state of decay, has no intention either to occupy the states that are in its sphere of interests, or to Bolshevize, or to annex them."* Therefore, the capture of the Baltic countries and the war with

Finland was regarded by Germany as a violation of the agreements. At the conclusion

of the first treaty in August 1939, Lithuania remained with Germany, but then it ceded it to the USSR "reluctantly and for the sake of peace." But after June 15, 1940, all of Lithuania, including the piece that remained in the sphere of influence of Germany, was captured by the USSR without warning.

Soviet claims to Bessarabia and North. Bukovina in 1940 also came as a surprise to the Germans, and they got only 24 hours to think about it. As stated in the note: *"Despite the fact that the Soviet government during the Moscow negotiations declared that it, for its part, would never take the initiative to resolve the Bessarabian issue, on June 24 the German government received a message from the Soviet government that it had renounced by force to resolve the Bessarabian issue. At the same time, it was reported that Soviet demands also extended to Bukovina, that is, to the region that belonged to the former Austrian Crown, never belonged to Russia, and which in Moscow at one time was not even mentioned at all. Germany "for the sake of preserving peace and*

friendship" advised Romania to cede these territories to the USSR. "These areas were also immediately annexed to the Soviet Union, were subjected to Bolshevization and were thereby virtually ruined." And further: "By the occupation and Bolshevization of the entire sphere of interests granted by the German government in Moscow to the Soviet Union, the Soviet government clearly and unequivocally acted in contradiction to the Moscow agreements."

After the incident with the capture of Bessarabia and Sev. Bukovina, Germany had no more doubts that the USSR was pursuing a policy hostile to it. The authors of the note see a clear confirmation of this in the report of the Yugoslav military attache in Moscow dated December 17, 1940, found in Belgrade, which stated: *"According to statements from Soviet circles, the armament of the air fleet, tanks and artillery, based on the experience of this war, is in full swing and will be mostly completed before August 1941. This, in all likelihood, is the deadline before which major changes in Soviet foreign policy cannot be expected."*

To eliminate misunderstandings, Molotov arrived in Berlin in August 1940 and made new territorial demands, listed in the note:

"1. The Soviet Union wishes to give Bulgaria guarantees and, moreover, to conclude a pact of mutual assistance with this state on the model of the pacts concluded in the Baltic regions, i.e. also with the formation of military strongholds ... 2.

The Soviet Union demands the conclusion of an agreement with Turkey in order to create bases for land and sea military forces of the USSR near the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles on the basis of a long-term pact. In the event that Turkey did not declare its consent to this, Germany and Italy should join the Soviet diplomatic measures to implement this demand ...

3. The Soviet Union again declares that it feels threatened by Finland and therefore demands the complete provision of Finland to it by Germany, which in reality would mean the occupation of this state and the death of the Finnish people. On all these points, "which was a prerequisite for the Soviet government to join the Three Powers Pact," Molotov was denied.

Further, the note lists other examples of the hostile attitude of the USSR towards Germany in the political and military sphere - support for the putsch in Yugoslavia, inciting Turkey and Romania against Germany, and, finally, the concentration of "at least 160 divisions" against Germany on the western borders (! - D.Kh.).

The Note ends as

follows: *"Despite all the commitments it has undertaken and in gross contradiction to its solemn declarations, the Soviet government has taken a position against Germany. It not only*

continued its attempts at disintegration directed against Germany and Europe, but even intensified them with the outbreak of war; it directed its policy against Germany with increasing hostility and concentrated all its military forces near the German border with a readiness for a quick attack.

Thus, the Soviet government changed its treaties and agreements with Germany and violated them ... Therefore, the Führer now gave the order to the German army to oppose this threat with all

the means at its disposal. The German people are aware that in the forthcoming struggle they are not only defending their homeland, but that they are also called upon to save the entire cultural world from the deadly danger of Bolshevism and pave the way for a true social rebirth of Europe.

Of course, the Fuhrer lies about his own goals. Hitler's rhetoric about saving the cultural world from Bolshevism was as much a setup as Stalin's corresponding declarations about saving the world from the fascist threat. Neither one nor the other world was going to be saved from

themselves. But the goals and policies of Stalin are described in this document quite correctly. In the spring of 1941, Germany should have feared very seriously for its security. And it was by no means worth relying on Stalin's promises to honor the agreements with Hitler. With all Hitler's desire to sooner or later deal with the Soviet Union, the time for expanding the "German living space" to the East, if we assume that this is what he intended to do, was extremely poorly chosen. Europe is captured, but not pacified and not mastered. England is blocked on the island, but the prospects for victory over her are very problematic. But on the horizon is the very real prospect of war with America. And in the east hangs Stalin, frankly spitting on any agreements and concentrating an army of 5 million on the border in the last stage of readiness for an attack. Under these conditions, the beginning of a war on two fronts was a desperate, and, as experience has shown, a hopeless attempt by Hitler to turn the tide.

In fact, the violation by the Soviet Union of the frankly criminal treaty with Germany of 1939 could only be welcomed if the goal was to prevent war in alliance with the West. Alas, Stalin's goals were diametrically opposed.

So, the attack of the Wehrmacht in the summer of 1941 was initially preventive in a strategic sense. It warned of an obvious and imminent attack by Stalin in the near and foreseeable future. But it became de facto preventive in the short-term, tactical sense, unexpectedly for the German leadership, who discovered only in hindsight what danger they had succeeded in

avoid that moment. However, this luck did not help Germany ultimately win the war.

Stalin's tactical error in calculating the timing of the attack turned out to be historically surmountable, Hitler's strategic error in choosing an ally was fatal.

Andrey Morozov. Si vis rasem para bellum

The unpreparedness of the Soviet Union for war and the “mistakes of the Stalinist leadership” have become a commonplace in almost all historical studies relating to the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. But was the Red Army so helpless? Was it not she who was able to stop the German Wehrmacht, which defeated Poland in a month, France - in six weeks, utterly defeated the British troops in France, Greece, Crete and Africa? Did the Soviet Union suffer a greater defeat than occupied Poland? Capitulated France? England praying for US entry into the war? Why should the first heavy battles of the Soviet troops with the forces of the entire united Europe be considered a shame, and not a feat? The year 1940 can be considered the beginning of active preparations for the Soviet-German war for both warring parties. The absence of clear results in the Soviet-German negotiations this autumn spurred the development by the Germans of a war plan against the USSR, that same “Barbarossa”. Hitler wanted not only to receive oil and bread from the USSR. He wanted them to become German, so that they would not have to be paid for with German engineering products. It is difficult to say what exactly convinced him of the need for this war - although the role of Hitler's industrial advisers, who had extensive connections with American capital, is quite obvious here. Apparently, they guaranteed him the passive role of the United States and England in the coming war with the USSR.

Naturally, Hitler was deceived. Europe, to the delight of England and the United States, received a four-year bloody meat grinder. The war plan with the offensive of three army groups (North, Center and South) in three different directions with a constantly expanding front of operations has long been recognized as an adventure. Surprisingly, the first to recognize it as an adventure were the German generals. And among the critics is Heinz Guderian, the godfather of the German tank forces, co-author of the most adventurous of all military doctrines - “blitzkrieg”, “blitzkrieg”.

Both he and many other generals in their memoirs complain about the risk of a war on two fronts, the impossibility of waging it for a long time. However, the risky plan was adopted. The duration of the war, according to the Germans themselves, was determined at two months. Neither fuel reserves nor strategic reserves were calculated for a longer period. After that, according to the plan, the USSR lost all ability to defend, and the "communist system" was supposed to collapse. Further, not war was supposed, but occupation. Strategic planning ended in the autumn of 1941. High risk turned into a much-desired surprise. The adversary of Germany simply did not expect such an adventurous plan - as in the case of the offensive against the Allies in the summer of 1940 in the Ardennes.

The plan for the war against the USSR, approved on December 18, 1940, provided for victory over the Soviet Union in the course of a fleeting summer, maximum summer-autumn campaign. It was supposed to defeat the main forces of the Soviet army west of the Dnieper-Western Dvina line, capture Kyiv, Moscow, Leningrad, Donbass and reach the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan line. The Wehrmacht was instructed to "prevent the retreat of combat-ready units into the expanses of Russian

territory." What did the Wehrmacht do to still complete this incredibly difficult task in such a short time? Increased numbers? Not only. In the late autumn and winter of 1940, German tank divisions were deployed. 10 divisions of 250-350 tanks each were reorganized into 20 of 150-200 tanks. The total number of tanks did not increase much with the doubling of divisions, but new vehicles were constantly added to the old tanks. Interestingly, at the same time, the number of vehicles and other auxiliary units (for example, engineering) in the divisions did not decrease.

Modern historians tend to speak of this deployment as a whim of Hitler, ridiculing his dilettantism in military matters. However, they stubbornly ignore the fact that the combat effectiveness of tank divisions, the shock fist of the "blitzkrieg", is determined not only and not so much by the number of tanks in it, but by the number of auxiliary means - mainly vehicles. Before these divisions, breaking through to the rear

the enemy, seize railway stations and establish train traffic, the only reliable transport will remain the own transport columns of the tank division. And these are several thousand vehicles carrying absolutely everything - soldiers' rations, the soldiers themselves, shells, fuel, spare parts.

If bad roads are to be driven, reducing the speed of delivery of goods, the division needs to replenish the fleet in order to maintain the speed and depth of operations. If a large number of water barriers are to be crossed, each tank should have more sappers and pontoons. In this way it is possible to adapt the divisions that have conquered France and Poland to the expanses of Russia, to its roads and rivers, and most importantly, to maintain the pace of operations in order to meet the deadlines. "Hitler's absurd whim, not approved by his generals" turns into the first obvious step towards preparing a "blitzkrieg" war against Russia. The step is true and ensured the overcoming of all spaces and obstacles, except for one - the courage and heroism of Soviet soldiers. After all, it was precisely the complete cessation of resistance by the Soviet army and the surrender of encircled units in full force according to the French model that were taken as an axiom when drawing up the plan. A series of irresistible strikes, deep coverage and - the world.

To ensure the most important thing, the pace, the Germans mobilized the resources of all of Europe, confiscating civilian vehicles and patching up trophy ones. Own German auto industry, according to the same Guderian, "did not satisfy the growing needs."

What happened in the USSR? It is often said that the Soviet Union is preparing an aggressive war, relying on the fact that it allegedly built up tank forces, put together large mechanized formations, and did not build long-term fortifications on the border. But why build these fortifications if the summer of 1940 showed that the cyclopean concrete border fortifications were ineffective? The Germans bypassed the Maginot Line through the narrow, unprotected corridor of the Ardennes forests. And how many such gaps would have been on the border of the USSR, which was much longer than the Franco-German one? One narrow passage punched in such a line - and enemy tanks in the rear. To eliminate them, large tank formations are required. At

France did not have any. The USSR had them. So what did the USSR do wrong? The question

of whether Stalin was preparing an attack on Germany in the summer of 1941 can be permanently removed by the publication of detailed data on the available vehicles of the Red Army. After all, the receipt by the entire army of equipment from the national economy "on mobilization" is clearly not a matter of one day, not one week. In the summer, at the peak of agricultural work - even more so. And on June 22, the equipment was not received. Today, "tanks of the Red Army on June 22" are counted by historians almost by the piece, but information about the availability, and most importantly, the technical condition of vehicles,

somehow remains in the shadows. By the beginning of the war, everyone recognizes the nominally acute shortage of vehicles and tractor-tractors in the Red Army, but for some reason they do not draw conclusions, comparing only the number of enemy tanks. But it is clear that the 375 tanks assigned to the Soviet tank division, with 1360 vehicles and 630 motorcycles assigned to it, are much more defense-oriented than the 180-200 tanks of the German division with more than two thousand vehicles and 1300 motorcycles. Tanks - the power of impact, motorized infantry covering their flanks - his shoulder, depth. In the Soviet division there are two tank regiments and one motorized infantry regiment, in the German division it is the other way around. It turns out that in comparison with the German divisions, the Soviet ones were much less "offensive", even judging by the staff, and not b

If the Soviet Union was preparing for war, then for the very one that is briefly described in the famous song "If there is war tomorrow". By the way, the public Soviet military doctrine of that time - an attack by the enemy, a counterattack, the transfer of the war to the territory of the enemy - did not differ too much from reality. By the end of the counterattack, which required not so much depth as tank power, the mobilized vehicles just had time to transfer the war to enemy territory. As for the alleged "offensive" advance of aviation

to the borders, it was in fact a general, and not an offensive deployment. Under the first strike of German aviation, it was mainly the airfields of fighters that, already, in fact that they were fighters, should have been located close to the border. The Germans knew that they would destroy mainly fighters, and

they hoped that the Soviet bombers would not dare to attack the German columns without their cover. But they dared. And even long-range bombers, together with front-line bombers, bombed and fired at German columns, sacrificing themselves, but gaining time. Captain Gastello and the pilots of his squadron flew the Il-4 long-range bombers. The suicidal raids of Soviet pilots, as

well as the desperate attacks of Soviet tanks and infantry, won invaluable hours and days, taking them away from those 6-8 weeks that the Germans assigned to the war. Hours of delay in traffic jams, idle tanks without fuel and spare parts, burned convoys - all this led to delays.

Yes, it is foolish to deny that the Germans achieved operational surprise. But they reached it in the summer of 1940, although France had already been at war with Germany for 9 months and was preparing to repel the attack. In operational art, the Germans then had no equal, they could only be "caught" by strategic miscalculations. The Red Army was seriously inferior to the Germans in the most important thing - organization. And she did not try to beat them in this game - to wait until communication and interaction were established, until everyone was given fuel, everyone was given ammunition and shells. So the French waited - and lo

The Red Army, having received a severe blow on June 22, acted absolutely logically in a situation of surprise attack. She left everything she could not carry and take with her. And she went to beat the enemy with what she has, and where she finds him. The hot oncoming tank battles of the summer of 1941, characterized by ninety percent of historians as failures and useless, actually played a decisive role in the war. Despite all the confusion in the management of the Soviet troops, they largely determined the outcome of the war - the Germans did not fit into the schedule, and the unconditional defeat of the USSR in the first year of the war did not work. The Russians didn't just fight. They fought

in the encirclement, fought their way out of the encirclement, counterattacked, and, once again being in the ring, broke out of it to their own. The very "combat-ready units", the retreat of which "into the expanses of Russian territory", the Wehrmacht was supposed to prevent, retreated with battles, uniting with suitable reinforcements.

The war in the depths of the country was not part of the plans of the Germans. The pace of operations decreased, they devoured more and more resources. The Soviet Union realized its only advantage - the ability to mobilize large masses of people psychologically ready for war. The sacrifices made in 1941, more than 3 million captured Soviet soldiers - all this is a payment for the fact that the Soviet Union has not yet managed to catch up with Germany in the development of industry. There was

nothing more to sacrifice. The Germans were faced with the fact that the critical level of losses, which makes the British and French units incompetent, is far from always the rule on the Eastern Front. They met with that from which their own manner of war came, merciless both to enemies and to themselves. With the Russians, as with the Germans, the collective instinct for self-preservation of the people prevailed over personal, private instincts. This became possible because the USSR, sensing the operational weaknesses of its armed forces, skilfully prepared for the war strategically. The people received unity, the society received a stable structure capable of withstanding extreme

loads. Here is what the head of the German General Staff Franz Halder writes about this in his "War Diary" (entry dated August 11). There is no rain yet, no "terrible Russian thaw", but there are already problems. We read: *"The general situation more and more clearly shows that the colossus is Russia, which deliberately prepared for war, despite all the difficulties inherent in countries with a totalitarian regime [Who writes this? Is this written by a German general in 1941? That's really who would be silent about totalitarianism! - A.M.], was underestimated by us. [What does Halder mean, is it really the T-34 and KV tanks or the latest Soviet fighters? No. - AM] This statement can be extended to all economic and organizational aspects, to means of communication, and in particular to the purely military capabilities of the Russians. By the beginning of the war we had about 200 enemy divisions against us. Now we have already 350 divisions. These divisions, of course, are not as armed and equipped as ours, and their command is tactically much weaker than ours, but, be that as it may, these divisions exist. And even if we defeat a dozen such divisions,*

the Russians will form a new dozen. The Russians are also gaining time because they are sitting at their bases, and we are moving further and further away from

ours. The Russians, like the French and Poles, could not avoid the surprise of the attack, but they withstood this surprise, while the French and Poles did not. The Russians secured for themselves the evacuation of industry, mobilization and the opportunity to produce more or less modern military equipment, initially focused on the scarcity of resources. Having lost 80% of aluminum production, the Russians nevertheless produced aircraft. Moreover, they increased their output. Yes, the planes were "plywood" (even the famous La-5 had a wooden structure), they were worse than the German ones and remained so almost until the very end of the war - but the Russians had no others, and they compensated for the quality with quantity.

Yes, this is exactly what is called "crush by number". But the rest of Europe couldn't even do that! France fell to the forces of Germany alone, to panzer divisions more than half armed with light tanks. The Soviet Union held its own against much more modern tank forces, against aviation with almost two years of combat experience, against the combined armies of Germany, Hungary, Romania and Finland, supplied with food from all over Europe. Against an industry supplied with Swedish iron ore and Swiss precision mechanics. There is an erroneous opinion among some historians that

the Russians were helped by their roads, spaces, winter frosts. The Germans allegedly did not take into account either one or the other, or the third. In fact, frosts, roads and spaces interfered with both. But the Russian military machine could withstand it, but the German one could not. And the Germans knew this very well before the war. *"As a result of the staff*

exercises of individual army groups," they write, " new problems have emerged: the problem of vast spaces and the problem of human resources. As the armies advanced deep into Russia, the initial front of 1,300 miles was to stretch to 2,500 miles ... Many drew attention to the difficulties associated with supplying a 3.5 million army and half a million horses in off-road conditions in a country where the railway gauge was different from the accepted in Europe".

Moreover, the German generals Halder and von Brauchitsch, back in July 1940, *"came to the conclusion that it would be wiser to maintain 'friendship with Russia' and encourage her aspirations towards the straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) and the Persian Gulf."* German

generals were aware of the sad experience of their predecessors. *"I could still hope that Hitler did not finally decide on a war with the Soviet Union, but only wanted to intimidate him,"* writes Guderian. *"But still, the winter and spring of 1941 were a nightmare for me."* The Germans knew all the difficulties of the

upcoming campaign, which is why they planned a quick war. Six to eight weeks. No war in the cold and mud! War in the summer, and then - only occupation. This plan was theoretically quite feasible. And it was almost fulfilled:

German tanks passed through Minsk, Kyiv and Rostov, stopped a few kilometers from Leningrad and Moscow. Almost completed - but it turned out that the correctly solved equations were incorrectly composed. They missed one constant, not including it in the system of equations, and got an error of 20 kilometers, which is why they never reached Moscow. They did not take into account that on June 22 alone, Soviet pilots would make eight air rams, and by the end of the war - all six hundred. The Germans, preparing for war, expected to meet subhumans, but stumbled upon bigger "Aryans" than they

themselves.

Guy Sayer, a private of the elite German division "Grossdeutschland", describing his ordeals in Ukraine in 1943, not envisaged by the "Barbarossa" plan, honestly admits that he learned a lot about the Russians during the war: *"We died by the thousands that autumn in Ukrainian steppe, and how many heroes died in battles without getting recognition! Even the stubborn ones understood that no matter how many hundreds of Russians you kill, with what courage you fight. After all, the next day there will be the same number, and then more and more. Even the blind saw that the Russians were driven by desperate heroism, and even the death of millions of compatriots would not stop them."*

Not for fatal errors in analytical calculations, not for some mythical stupidity of Hitler or his generals, Germany paid such a terrible price on the Eastern Front. She paid for it

banal European chauvinism, for a contemptuous attitude towards the Russian people.

In German school anthologies during the youth of Private Guy Sayer, they wrote: "Russian blond, lazy, cunning, loves to drink and sing." But it was the Russians who survived then, in 1941, when everyone lost to the Germans. We survived, and then won, drank and sang. If someone needs another lesson on the same reader, the Russians can repeat it. Broken furniture - at the expense of the institution.

Vladislav Goncharov. History or propaganda?

The dispute about the causes of the defeats of the Soviet Union and the Red Army in the first period of the Great Patriotic War once again confirms the old thesis that history is politics overturned into the past.

Initially, the reasons for the defeats were the suddenness of the attack, the decisive superiority of Nazi Germany in forces and means, as well as the criminal negligence of the command of the Western Front. It is not difficult to understand that such a formulation of the question removed the responsibility for what had happened from the top Soviet leadership,

including JV Stalin. During the period of the "thaw", the last point was changed - now Stalin himself was accused of criminal negligence, having allowed the country and the army to be unprepared for a German attack. Again, it is quite understandable that this removed responsibility from the military, including those who, by the 1960s, occupied leading positions not only in the army, but also in the state.

Now, in the age of pluralism, historians have definitively divided into three camps. Some argue that the main reasons for the defeats were purely military - the weakness and underdeployment of the Red Army, the superiority of the enemy in technical equipment, maneuverability and level of command. Others, with figures in hand, denying that the Wehrmacht had any significant superiority, citing Stalinist repressions, the mediocrity of the Red Army leadership and the unwillingness of the Soviet soldier to fight for the "bloody Bolshevik regime" as the main

reasons. The third version, against the background of the first two, looks the most original - it assumes that the army was ready for war and was quite combat-ready, the repressions only made it healthier, and the reason for the defeat was that Hitler just got ahead of Stalin, hitting first. This version equally suits both the "Westerners" (we wanted to conquer Europe!), and the "patriots" (and we almost won it!), which provided it with an undeservedly wide

popularity among the masses. However, for the same reason, this version turns out to be the least independent, providing arguments (as a rule, based on emotional assessments) to one side or the other, therefore, it cannot be considered as an independent phenomenon.

Let's go back to the first two versions. Obviously, each of them is not limited to an analysis of the events of 1941, but derives from it an assessment of the entire history of our country in the 20th century - as well as possible ways of its future development. After all, it is no secret to anyone that the victory in the Great Patriotic War is still perceived as an outstanding achievement of the Soviet Union and the socialist system (and, indirectly, of I.V. Stalin). The proof that, under a different government and a different system, victory could have been achieved with much less effort and with fewer victims (or this victory would not have had to be achieved at all), at the same time turns out to be a weighty argument in modern political struggle. We emphasize that the current

situation in itself is quite natural, it has always been so in all countries, since ancient times. It is normal for a historian to have certain beliefs, and even more natural to love his country and seek to justify or at least explain certain of its actions. It is just the situation when the historian seeks to expose and stigmatize

the past of his homeland, not even trying to understand the reasons for certain events, and even more so, calls his compatriots "slaves" and "cattle" that is abnormal. However, such a situation is by no means unique, at different times it developed in different countries, and usually indicates a deep political and spiritual crisis and a split in society.

Again, this does not mean that the past of any country in the presentation of its historians must necessarily be clear and unambiguous. But it should be recognized that historians (as well as representatives of other social sciences) are divided not by political views and convictions, but by scientific conscientiousness. A bad historian will adjust the facts to a pre-established concept, either ignoring data that breaks out of it, or replacing them with "convenient" ones that confirm his pre-prepared conclusions (fortunately, there is an array of

publications, quite sufficient to dig out something suitable in it). A good historian will strive to use in his analysis the totality of facts available to him, including even unpleasant ones, and eventually adjust the concept in accordance with the picture he has. And in this regard, an honest opponent is always

preferable to an ally-demagogue - after all, he provides not only objective figures and facts, but also analysis, that is, food for thought and his own conclusions.

Alas, the situation of "political order" makes it tempting to use the methods of political agitation in historical science, replacing the analysis of facts with their *interpretation*. Moreover, the interpretation is extremely simplified, designed for the "electorate". The 11th commandment of the famous American Nazi theorist David Lane says: "The truth does not require a long explanation." In other words, the simpler and more primitive the explanation, the better it will be perceived

by the general public. Alas, the use of simplified explanations is not limited. Sometimes it comes to direct falsifications. The most famous is the story of Stalin's speech, allegedly delivered by him at a secret meeting of the Politburo on August 19, 1939. In this speech, Stalin frankly revealed a plan to provoke a new world war in which the European powers were to exhaust themselves. On November 28 of the same year,

the recording of this speech was published by the French news agency "Gavas" as "a document received from Moscow through Geneva from a source that deserves absolute trust." For some time it did not receive much resonance, but after June 22, 1941, "Stalin's speech" was published several times in Vichy France and in neutral Switzerland, each time in a new presentation, more in line with the "requirements of the moment." The channels of its appearance were also clarified - allegedly the Geneva correspondent of the Havas agency, Henri Ruffin, either received it in printed form from some unnamed "high-ranking person", or wrote it down from the words of this very person in Geneva on November 27, 1939. During the war years, "Stalin's speech" was actively used by

Nazi propaganda, but after 1945, interest in it dried up - both because of

the dubious reputation of Ruffin, and due to the lack of any evidence of its reliability. However, everything changed in 1994, when the historian T.S. Bushuyeva announced (in the 12th issue of the Novy Mir magazine) that she had found a recording of Stalin's speech made by an unknown person in French "in the secret trophy funds of the Special Archive of the USSR" language.

Novy Mir is not an academic source, especially since Bushuyeva's publication was a review of Viktor Suvorov's books. However, less than a year later, "Stalin's speech" was introduced into scientific circulation by the historian V. L. Doroshenko at a historical seminar in Novosibirsk in the report "Stalin's provocation of the Second World War"; in the same year, Doroshenko's report was reprinted in the Moscow collection War 1939–1945: Two Approaches, edited by the well-known historian of perestroika, Yuri Afanasiev. At the same time, Afanasiev himself confirmed the authenticity of the speech, referring to a certain "source analysis". A little later, the "discovery" of Bushuyeva was used by the historian D. G. Nadzhafov, who directly (that is, without parsing the authenticity and references to any analysis) stated that documentary confirmation of the message of the Gavass agency found in Soviet archives.

If Bushuyeva at least referred to the "trophy fund", then neither Doroshenko, nor Afanasiev, nor Nadzhafov even mentioned it. And even more so, no one mentioned that the document was found in the fund of the 2nd Bureau of the French General Staff, executed on the official letterhead of the Vichy military department and provided with the same standard note about receipt from a "reliable source - and in addition [194] an indication to use it for propaganda purposes. — .

The reference to the Russian archive and the authority of the "foreman of perestroika" Afanasyev instantly played their role - revisionist historians declared the document published by Bushuyeva and Doroshenko to be the original. And from now on, most Western researchers refer to it as documentary evidence of Stalin's insidious plans. You can talk for a long time about

the reliability of the "Ruffin document", refer to the opinion of certain authorities or conduct various source and textual analyzes. These arguments may or may not have scientific value, but

now it's not about that. The bottom line is that Bushuyeva and Doroshenko's find does not prove the authenticity of Stalin's speech in any way, and the link to the archive in this case is a completely conscious lie based on the "default method": the deliberate distortion of information by omitting key details. By the way, recently the revisionists have been behaving more cautiously - they no longer insist that *the original source of the "speech" was found*, and the mention of the archive is intended only to create a distorted impression in the uninitiated reader about the origin of the document. By the way, among the accusers of the "bloody Stalinist regime"

this method of falsification is quite popular. For example, at the dawn of Ukrainian independence, the Kiev newspaper Literaturnaya Ukraina published Stalin's "top secret" order of 1944 on the deportation of all (!) Ukrainians to Siberia. The document was even provided with a link to the archive - and, as it turned out, genuine. The publication omitted just a little - that the "Stalin order" was distributed as a German

leaflets.

Of course, all these games have nothing to do with science, but the authors of such fakes are not interested in science - they are created and put into circulation solely for propaganda purposes.

Let's summarize what has been said. The measure of the historical value and objectivity of the study is the accuracy and completeness of the figures and facts given in it. In turn, incompleteness and inaccuracy can be the result of both conscientious misconceptions (distortion of figures in sources, incompleteness of the source base itself), and a conscious desire to fit the facts to an already existing concept. The latter contradicts the very principles of scientific work and turns the person who uses such methods from a researcher into a political journalist - that is, a propagandist. Of course, there is a line between the deliberate distortion of information and the use of such

information out of ignorance. However, incompetence is also not an excuse for a person who positions himself as an expert in a particular field - in this case, the lie will consist in a distorted self-esteem.

However, it happens much more often when the forger quite consciously chooses from several data exactly distorted, but confirming his concept. It is often rather difficult to prove the intentionality of such a selection, but it can be done by indirect evidence: the juggling of data is usually done "comprehensively" and is accompanied by omissions in those places where it turned out to be difficult to find "scientifically consecrated" figures.

A good example of such a falsification is the question of the balance of forces of the parties by June 22, 1941. Soviet historians wrote about the significant superiority of Germany - modern historians (and not only Western ones) somehow recognized the superiority of the Soviet Union in terms of forces and means as a truth. The most common argument is the number of tanks. It turns out that the Wehrmacht had only three and a half thousand of them, and the Red Army had twenty or even twenty-five thousand. At the same time, the number of personnel and other military equipment is not even mentioned, or it is said in passing, patter - they say, everything is

already clear ... However, when a professional historian with the appropriate titles and regalia touches on the topic, one cannot do without a reference to the number of tanks. Therefore, it is necessary to use the methods described above or

their variations. For example, when the well-known German revisionist historian I. Hoffman in his book "Stalin's War of Annihilation" (1999) gives an absolutely fantastic figure of the presence of artillery in the German army in the East by June 22, 1941 - 7146 barrels, it is difficult, but one can imagine that the officer of the Bundeswehr and the staff member of the "Bundesarchiv" is not familiar with any German research on this issue that came out after the 1950s. However, when right there, after comparing the number of aircraft and tanks of the parties (naturally, demonstrating the multiple superiority of the Red Army), the question of *the number of troops* of the parties is clearly omitted (for the Red Army only the total number of divisions is given, not a word is said about the Wehrmacht), it is possible with confidence assert - Hoffman shuffles information quite deliberately, because it is difficult to suspect him of

ignorance of the issue. Once again, we will make a reservation that the historian's delusions can be quite conscientious, based on the incomplete

his information, an incorrect assessment of its reliability or the lack of a deep analysis of the facts presented, the unwillingness or inability to "see the root". However, to date, enough information has already been accumulated on the question of the balance of power so that it can be adequately analyzed. It is known that by

the beginning of the war in the Soviet armed forces there were almost 5.8 million people, including more than 350 thousand in the fleet and 340 thousand in the border and internal troops of the NKVD. Of this number, 900 thousand were called up for "large military training" as part of the covert mobilization carried out since May 1941. The grouping of Soviet troops

in the western border districts numbered just over 3 million people, including 2.7 million directly in the Red Army, 216 thousand in the fleet and 154 thousand in the NKVD troops. With the armed forces of Germany, everything is

somewhat less clear. According to the fundamental work of B. Müller-Hillebrant, as of June 1941, they consisted of 7,234,000 people in total - of which 3,950,000 people were in the ground forces and SS troops, 404,000 people in the navy, 1,680,000 people in the Luftwaffe, 1.2 million were the reserve army. 3.3 million of the ground forces were deployed against the Soviet Union. More recent studies give slightly different numbers for the Germans - mostly

upwards. The total number of German forces deployed to attack the Soviet Union was most fully calculated in the works of M. Meltyukhov, who used modern German research. In his opinion, a little more than 4 million people were concentrated to attack the USSR, including 650 thousand in the Air Force and about 100 thousand in the Navy - and not all of these troops were on the border by June 22. With the troops of Germany's allies (Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Finland), this amounted to approximately 4.8 million people.

In fact, these figures can also be argued. As we can see, for the Soviet Union, 61% of the entire strength of the Navy is included in the balance, while for the German fleet, the proportion turns out to be completely different - 100,000 out of 404, or less than 25%. Meanwhile, in the first days of the war (after all, we are talking only about them), from the Soviet

fleet, only the crews of several ships of the Black Sea and Baltic fleets, the personnel of the Danube and Pinsk flotillas, as well as naval bases in Libau and on the Hanko Peninsula - a total of no more than 10-15 thousand sailors. The air forces of the fleets in the early days of the war were also used

[195] very limited An — .

even more interesting picture is observed with the ground units of the Luftwaffe. As you know, in the Soviet armed forces, the Air Force was part of the ground forces, while in Germany they were separated into a separate branch of the military under the personal patronage of Reichsmarschall Goering. It is less known that the German Air Force also included a wide range of purely ground forces - not only transport units, airfield security and service personnel, but also the entire air defense system, both at the front and in the rear. This explains such a large number of personnel of the German Air Force - 1,680,000 people on June 22, 1941, 23% of the strength of all German armed forces (or even 28%, if you do not take into account the reserve army). Therefore, the figure cited with reference to German sources of 650,000 (or 39% of the total) Luftwaffe soldiers and officers involved in the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 raises some doubts.

By the way, the anti-aircraft artillery of the air defense, as belonging to the department of Goering, is usually not taken into account in the composition of the German ground forces - and after all, the "flak" batteries accompanied the German troops and actively participated in repelling Soviet tank counterattacks, about which German memoirists write a lot and with pleasure. Unfortunately, the topic of the participation of the ground forces of the German Air Force in hostilities is generally studied by the Germans (who, it would seem, should do this) extremely poorly and reluctantly.

Finally, it is not entirely correct to compare Soviet troops, "spread out" over the entire territory of the districts and including transport, reserve, training, organizational and other non-combat structures, with an army prepared for an attack and concentrated directly on the border. Naturally, there were much more troops on German territory, similar in size to the Soviet border districts. In the end, the troops of the western districts made up 52% of the total

Soviet armed forces, including the troops of the NKVD. At the same time, it turns out that the Germans, already prepared for the attack, concentrated almost the same proportion of their armed forces here - 55%.

However, even if we take into account only the above figures, it turns out that in the entire theater the enemy had more than one and a half superiority in manpower. By the way, since the 1960s, Soviet historiography has given almost the same figure - 3 million Soviet troops against 5-5.5 million Germans from allies.

Such superiority in the theater (and not in a separate section of it) is in principle sufficient to take the initiative into one's own hands and, by attacking first, achieve an overwhelming advantage in the directions of the main attacks. Fortunately, almost along the entire length of the Soviet border south of the Baltic, the conditions of the terrain were favorable for [196] the deployment of troops and the — .

conduct of the offensive did not exceed it (nevertheless, occupied Europe worked for Germany). But the strategy of "blitzkrieg" did not involve a long war. The quantitative advantage in manpower could only be parried at the expense of a qualitative one - technical or organizational. With the latter, everything is clear - alas, the Wehrmacht surpassed the Red

Army both in terms of experience and the level of training of command personnel. It is pointless to draw any conclusions from this - in the same way, the German army surpassed the French, British and American armies in its fighting qualities, not only in the Second, but also in the First World War. There remains equipment - transport, artillery, tanks and aircraft, as well as communication systems. In general, only artillery can be recognized as comparable in quality from this list - in Russia, its organization, as well as the

material part, has traditionally been at a high level. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about anti-aircraft artillery, especially small-caliber artillery, the production of which requires a completely different level of technology.

With the rest of the types of equipment in the Soviet Union, the matter it was very sad.

Take, for example, motor vehicles, which provide troops with mobility and maneuverability. For some reason, German and "pro-German" researchers really do not like to remember him and usually in their calculations they simply omit data on the equipment of the Wehrmacht with vehicles. However, back in the 1950s, B. Müller Hillebrant wrote that 500,000 thousand wheeled vehicles were allocated for the war in the East - obviously, without taking into account the air defense forces, which his statistics generally concern very sparingly. More recent research raises this figure to 600,000 - and again, only for the ground forces, excluding the Luftwaffe.

How were things with motor transport in the Red Army? They were bad. On June 20, 1941, there were 273,000 vehicles in all Soviet armed forces, of which 257,800 were trucks. Moreover, among trucks, 151,100 (or 59%) were GAZ-AA lorries and only 39% were heavier all-wheel drive vehicles. Of this number, in the western border districts (but not only in the troops and at the very border) there were 149,300 vehicles or 54.6% of the vehicle fleet of the Red Army [197] Thus, by the beginning of the war, the enemy outnumbered us in the number of vehicles at least 4 times , and even more in terms of the quality characteristics of the — .

machines. It is not surprising that all revisionists diligently ignore the question of motor transport and turn their attention exclusively to those areas in which the Red Army had a clear numerical advantage - to tank troops and aviation, in which the Soviet Union allegedly outnumbered Germany many times over. Indeed, judging by the numerical strength of the air forces of the parties, only in the East the Soviet Union had an almost double superiority in aviation, but in terms of the total number of air forces it was almost fourfold. However, most of the Soviet Air Force fleet was made up of models launched into series

in the first half of the 1930s, and the German Air Force was dominated by models whose production began in the second half of the decade. Nevertheless, the "revisionists" for some reason announce the German biplanes "Arado" Ag.68 and "Henschel" Hs. 123 obsolete by May 1940 - although

the first was two years, and the second a year "younger" than the

domestic I-16. Alas, with aircraft of new types (Yak-1, MiG-3, LaGG-3, I-2, Pe-2) [198], put into production literally on the eve of the war, things were much worse. Before the start of the war, 2739 aircraft of these types were produced, but only 1354 pilots were retrained for them. At the same time, there were only 706 such vehicles in combat units, of which 377 were in the western districts [199]

It is quite difficult to evaluate "on the fingers" the comparative qualities and "obsolescence" of certain aircraft. For example, the I-153 biplane, which went into production in 1938, did not surpass the I-16 in its tabular characteristics. In general, we can only state the fact that the bulk of Soviet aircraft were significantly inferior in speed to their opponents - fighters on average at 100 km / h, bombers at 50 km / h. Here, even the cost of

production will not help us, because it is calculated in the national currency, the exchange rate of which can be [200] machines that country and the army. And here we determine how much it cost the will discover amazing things. In 1940, the Soviet aviation industry employed 272,600 workers, while the German aviation industry numbered [201] about 2 million people was higher! True, there are other data. Western historians (in particular, Professor

Williamson R. Murray) estimate the number of people employed in the Soviet aircraft industry in 1938 at 152,000 people, and in the German at 204,000 people. one

• And at the same time, the production of aircraft in the USSR Apparently,

in this case, the term "employed in the aviation industry" is understood more narrowly: only the workers themselves, without employees and without taking into account related organizations. But even in this case, the production of one aircraft in Germany took much more labor than in the USSR. In 1938, 7,727 aircraft were produced in the USSR, and 5,235 in Germany. Accordingly, the Germans spent 39 people on the construction of one aircraft, we - 20 people.

To verify these figures, we turn to a later period. It is known that as of January 1, 1944, 640,213 people were employed in the aviation industry of the USSR (of which only 435,385 were actually workers). At the same time, from 1941 to 1943, the number of people employed in the industry increased by 17 percent - that is, it turns out that in 1941, 550 thousand people worked in the Soviet aviation industry.^[202] For the entire 1943 year, 34,884 aircraft were produced in the USSR (of which 29,887 were combat). That is, the production of one aircraft, on average, was the labor of 12.5 workers (or 18 people, if we take into account watchmen, accountants and storekeepers). In the same 1943 (data for November), the German aircraft industry ^[203] employed — , 760,300 people ^[204] , while 24,807 aircraft were produced during the year - 31 man on the plane.

The casket opens easily. The German commission, which visited Soviet aircraft factories in 1940, noted their independence from external supplies (i.e., the absence of subcontractors), while a similar Soviet commission that returned from Germany, on the contrary, drew attention to the widely developed cooperation and evaluated the work itself aircraft factories in only 50-60% of the total labor intensity. This is aircraft ^[205] . indirectly confirmed by German data: in 1940, the cost of aircraft produced was 38.5% of all weapons produced by Germany (in 1941 - already 40.8%) [206] In the USSR, the share of production aviation industry in the total military production in the second half of the 30s was about 20%, that is, it was half as much. And this despite the fact that even according to post-war Western estimates (which tended to overestimate the military potential of the USSR), at the end of the 1930s, Germany was at least one and a half times ahead of the USSR in terms of military production [207] I apologize to the reader for this abundance numbers.

and arithmetic calculations - but without them it is simply impossible to understand where certain final data come from, what they mean and why information from different sources can vary so significantly.

In any case, it is not necessary to prove that the Soviet industry was obviously weaker than the German one both in terms of technological equipment and in terms of the skill level of the worker.

strength. But we see a paradox - the production of one aircraft of the USSR spent 2-4 times less human labor than Germany. It is labor, not even money; in monetary terms, given the lower level of wages in the USSR, the difference would be even more impressive.

It is quite obvious that it is simply useless to compare Soviet and German aircraft "one to one" - they have a completely different technical and technological level. There are no miracles in the world, so the real combat value of the Soviet aircraft was also at least two times (and in fact - three to four times) less than that of a German aircraft of the same year of manufacture. The lag in quality could only be compensated

quantity.

At the same time, even with a decrease in the production of military equipment, it was still impossible to raise the technological level and the qualifications of workers - it could grow only with the accumulation of experience. Moreover, unlike shipbuilding, here one cannot even nod at the negative consequences of the revolution and the civil war, which "defiled a quite decent country". At the beginning of 1917, the Russian aviation industry produced 250 aircraft and 150 engines per month (in England - 1000 engines, in France - 1900 with twice their capacity), the automotive industry - at best assembled cars from foreign spare parts and was engaged in booking imported chassis. And now let's move on to tanks, which, with

the light hand of V. Rezun-Suvorov, have become extremely fashionable. It is known that by the beginning of the war the Soviet Union had either 23 or 25 thousand tanks - in fact, the difference comes from more than two thousand T-27 tankettes, which by the beginning of the war were withdrawn from service and used for driving training, therefore among the equipment were listed, but among the combat - no. In addition, a significant proportion were the T-37A and T-38 amphibious tanks, armed with only one machine gun, as well as the first two-tower T-26 machine guns. In total, the Soviet Union had a total of about

[208] — .

Issues of 16 thousand

cannon tanks. In Germany, by June 1941, there were about 6300 tanks and self-propelled guns of domestic production, of which about 5 thousand were cannon. Moreover, the 20-mm automatic gun of the German "two"

at a distance of half a kilometer, it could fight most Soviet tanks of old brands - but the 45-mm guns of the Soviet T-26 and BT against most German tanks at such a distance were already ineffective. However, the German tank fleet

was by no means limited to this. After fighting in France in 1940, the Germans captured about one and a half thousand (!) French cannon tanks as trophies - 160 heavy B-1 and B-Ibis, 300 medium Somuas S-35, 870 light Renault R-35 and R-40s, 600 Hotchkiss H-35s and H-39s, and about fifty FCM-36s. These were very good vehicles for that time with strong armor (up to 45 mm even on light tanks) and a successful layout (some Western historians claim that the layout of the T-34 was borrowed from French vehicles). Nevertheless, most of these tanks (unlike the Czech ones) were not sent to "full-time positions" in tank

divisions - they were left in the rear, security and training units, or various motorized units and individual tank battalions were "freelance" equipped. It is impossible to trace the fate of most French vehicles, as well as to find out their number on the Eastern Front - it is only known that the 211th tank battalion operating in Finland had 58 Hotchkisses and Somuas, and in the 102nd tank battalion the flamethrower battalion attached to Army Group South had 30 heavy B-Ibis.

In the armies of Germany's Eastern European allies, there were about 500 more cannon tanks (not including the ancient Renault FT 17). So, 16,000 Soviet cannon tanks against 7,000 vehicles of a similar class at the disposal of Germany and its Eastern European allies. As we can see, there is a superiority of more than two times - but not five to seven times, as they tried to convince us! Why were German tankers so

reluctant to use captured French tanks, despite their superiority (in tabular terms) over German vehicles? Obviously, because the "French" did not have certain necessary qualities - for example, sufficient speed and range, the convenience of the commander and crew. After all, combat effectiveness

tank is not limited by the caliber of the gun and the thickness of the armor. And this is just as true for Soviet tanks as it is for French ones.

Therefore, let's be honest and if we compare, then comparable indicators, and not choose those that are convenient and pleasant for us. If we condemn Soviet historians for choosing only "medium and heavy" tanks of both sides or only tanks of "new models" for comparison, we should not play the same games, but in the other direction. And

now let's move on to the main question: is it possible to compare the combat value of Soviet and German tanks? Not by formal tabular indicators (speed, armor thickness, gun caliber), but by qualitative characteristics, which can be extremely difficult to formalize. And again, a universal parameter

comes to our aid - the labor intensity of the production of a particular machine. According to the data of the Englishman J. Forti, collected in the German archives, in 1943, the Germans needed about 300 thousand labor hours to manufacture one Tiger tank; the production of "Panther" cost "only" 150 [209]. Yes, neither the "Tiger" nor the tanks; the "Panther" were the main standard hours of the Wehrmacht latter cost about a third more than the "troika" or "four" (and more than two times cheaper than the "Tiger"). Accordingly, the labor costs for the production of Pz.III and Pz.IV should have been in the range of 100-120 thousand standard hours.

At the same time, the production of one T-34 in January 1943 at the Ural Tank Plant took 5,100 standard hours, and taking into account all subcontractors - 17,600 standard hours, [210] that is, 6-7 times less than its German counterpart. Of course, over time, German cars became cheaper - but the T-34-85 in 1944 already "cost" (without subcontractors) only 3521 labor hours.

One can argue with these figures and give other calculations, but they give a certain approximate order, explaining well why the Germans produced tanks and self-propelled guns in 1941-1945 ... not seven or even five, but only three times less than Soviet Union. Having spent on this, by the way, much more industrial resources - which they had more than the USSR. And, finally, the timing of the

"working out" of a particular piece of equipment from the start of design to launch in

series. Obviously, the longer the work on the machine, the more perfect it will be. The T-34, widely praised earlier and almost more often scolded now, really had a lot of shortcomings. It was not possible to correct them in mass production under conditions excluding a decrease in output until 1944. But what if this machine had been

created not in an emergency, but carefully and slowly, as the Germans did with the Pz.III and Pz.IV? For development - not a year, but two or three, for the organization of mass production - the same amount, with the successive release of several experimental small-scale models. And in the end, we would have received the "best tank of the Second World War" not by the beginning of the war, but exactly by the Battle of Kursk ... if it had taken place at all with this scenario. In this sense, the fate of much more successful and balanced models - the T-34M and T-50 is very indicative. The first of them did not go into the series at all, the second was released in a small series due to difficulties in reconfiguring production, although it was not inferior to the "thirty-four" in most parameters and at the same time was not only cheaper than its estimated cost, but also much more convenient to operate. So, we came to

the conclusion that a simple comparison of the number of a particular technique does not reflect the real combat value of this technique and does not give us the true balance of power. Despite the greater number of tanks or aircraft, the Red Army in 1941 not only did not surpass the Wehrmacht in technical equipment, but was significantly inferior to it, in a number of indicators - at

times. However, another question arises: was it possible, even with the existing opportunities, to organize the production of equipment more efficiently? Not "oil instead of guns", but at least "trucks instead of tanks". After all, the Soviet mechanized troops were clearly overloaded with armored vehicles with a catastrophic lack of wheeled vehicles - this is recognized by almost all modern historians from "liberals" to "Stalinists".

It is easy to be smart on paper, in hindsight, already knowing where it was necessary to lay the straw, but at the same time not presenting yourself with a lot of objective, but implicit factors that influenced both the adoption of certain decisions and their practical implementation. Let's take an example. The cost of the KV tank was just under a million rubles.

In total, from 1940 to 1943, more than three thousand of these machines were produced - which, nevertheless, did not have a noticeable impact on the strategic situation at the front. It is very easy to conclude that the Red Army did not need tanks at all, and their construction was, in modern terms, a "drank" - a waste of money that could be invested in something more meaningful with much more sense. For example, in the construction of the fleet. A simple arithmetic calculation shows that with the money saved

by refusing to build heavy Klim Voroshilov tanks, it was possible to build at least 20 Kirov-class cruisers (60 million rubles each), 50 project 7 or 7U destroyers (from 15 to 20 million rubles in 1939 prices), 120 high-speed minesweepers of the "Fugas" type (from 4 to 5 million rubles for 1939) and for the rest - half a thousand torpedo boats of the G-5 type (300 thousand rubles each). Such an armada made it possible not only to establish complete control over the Baltic and Black Seas at once, but also - and not least - to easily clear the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic fairways from enemy mines. And without being afraid of either mines or enemy submarines, having the ability to freely supply any coastal bases (Tallinn, Hanko, Moonsund, Sevastopol), the fleet could significantly change the course of the war on the coastal flanks ...

It is clear that all of the above is nothing more than good wishes and speculative calculations. To build and effectively use the described armada, one needs not only money, but also production facilities (not only shipbuilding), qualified personnel, trained sailors, a sufficient amount of weapons and equipment, including high-tech ones - for example, radar and fire control devices. But the same applies to any other type of military

equipment: tanks, tractors, tractors, aircraft and cars.

For example, a T-26 light tank destined for Spain cost 72,000 rubles (or \$20,150) in 1937, and a three-ton ZiS-5 truck cost 10,000 rubles. It is easy to calculate that instead of almost ten thousand "twenty-sixths" in 1941, we would have needed much more extra 70 thousand trucks. Moreover, in 1940 the same T-26 already cost 86 thousand (inflation!), And the price

the truck has not changed much due to the reduction in cost during the development of production.

The trouble is that the economy (neither socialist, nor any other) does not allow simply converting the production of one type of product into the production of another type, albeit of a similar cost. It is easy to come to the market with money taken from the nightstand and choose the right product for the available amount - but it is much more difficult to produce this product yourself, having established (with a considerable investment of time and money) the entire technological chain.

It can, of course, be said that instead of 20,000 tanks, it would have been better to produce 200,000 trucks, and that the desire to produce tanks, and not motor vehicles, indicates aggressive intentions: after all, cars can be used in the national economy, but tanks cannot. This argument sounds convincing even to knowledgeable and thinking people, because not everyone is a specialist in the organization of industrial production. Alas, the cost of a car is far from always proportional to the man-hours spent on its production, and even less production space is required for one car than for a tank, but far from ten times. For example, already during the war, it was found out that the refusal to produce one light self-propelled guns SU-76 makes it possible for the car factory where it was produced (in this case, GAZ) to produce only three additional trucks. Naturally, in war conditions, the choice was made in favor of self-propelled guns, not trucks. In general, the development of industrial production in the USSR is limited

limited skilled workers

exactly

quantity

(their number grew, but not at the rate that would be desirable) and the rate of construction of new industrial facilities. In fact, the cars themselves (and tanks) in the USSR at the end of the 30s were already relatively inexpensive. For comparison: the salary of a platoon commander in 1940 was 600 rubles a month, a company commander - 725 rubles, about the same amount a certified engineer received. The average salary in the country, of course, was lower - in industry it was 350 rubles. At the same time, the M-1 pickup truck cost 6 thousand rubles - 10 monthly salaries of a platoon commander ...

So, there were not enough cars in the country and in the army, not because they were too expensive, but because they simply did not have time to produce them in the right quantity. Was it possible to achieve an increase in the production of motor vehicles by reducing the production of tanks? Perhaps, although not ten times. However, this increase also went like this: in 1935, 76,854 cars were produced in the USSR, in 1936 - 131,546, in 1937 - 180,339, in 1938 - 182,373 cars. True, then this growth stopped, and then completely gave way to a fall: in 1939, 178,769 were produced, and in 1940 - only 135,958 cars. But this happened primarily due to a reduction in the production of "one and a half" while increasing the production of all-wheel drive vehicles with a carrying capacity of 3 tons or more. By the way, the production of tanks also decreased at the same time - also due to the transition to new, more

heavy cars.

Suppose we would refuse this transition and throw all our efforts into the production of automotive equipment. What did it result in? The USSR would not have met the war with 16,000 cannon tanks with half that ^[211], a number. At the expense of abandoning 8,000 tanks, at best we would have received 100-120 thousand vehicles - in practice, most likely, much less. It is difficult to say how much this would have improved the military situation for the Red Army, but the superiority of the Wehrmacht in providing vehicles still did not disappear. But during the war, we would no longer be able to establish the production of new armored vehicles in any acceptable quantities - with a completely predictable result ... This does not mean at all that the development of the motorized forces of the Red Army during the 1930s went the only right way. The pre-war leadership of the Armored Directorate had very conflicting ideas about the role of motorized infantry in the actions of mechanized forces - and this despite the works of K. B. Kalinovsky that appeared back in the late 1920s, in which a lot of attention was paid to motorized infantry, its interaction with tanks and the role of battlefield. Moreover, it is impossible to attribute the situation here to the repressions of 1937-1938: Kalinovsky died in a plane crash back in 1931, his works were published many times and formed the basis of official textbooks on the tactics of armored forces ... In a word, this issue is beyond the scope of this article and requires

special study. One thing is clear: the ideology of building the mechanized forces of the Red Army was determined not by someone's whim or stupidity, but had much deeper foundations.

It is probably worth briefly mentioning a few more common arguments of domestic revisionism. First of all, they concern the rapid defeat of Poland and France in 1939 and 1940. After all, neither in Poland, nor even more so in democratic France, there were no revolutions, no civil wars, large-scale repressions or collectivization - that is, with the loyalty of the population to the regime, everything seemed to be fine. Therefore, this argument is often used: neither one nor the other country had Russian open spaces, and they did not have the opportunity to retreat for many thousands of kilometers.

With regard to France, this is a blatant lie - she had at least Algeria, which was by no means easy for the Germans to get to. But now we are not even interested in this. It is quite characteristic that the same people who justify the defeat of European states by the lack of space ("hinterland") completely deny Hitler's desire to seize "living space" in the East. They say that one should not take seriously either racial theories, or the goal of the German state prescribed in *Mein Kampf* - "*to provide each of its sons with enough land for centuries to come*", or the desire for aggressive war frankly declared there in any variant of the organization of political blocs. Yes, there are people who deny that Nazism set itself the goal of destroying or turning into slaves the inhabitants of the conquered territories, that it ruthlessly destroyed everyone

who dared to resist it. Some also deny the existence of the "Order on Commissars", the "Order on Special Jurisdiction in the Barbarossa Zone", the mass extermination of "subhumans" - Slavs and Jews. It is useless to argue with such people, but it is necessary to catch them in a lie, because revisionism, as a rule, does not disdain arguments even from this

source.

One of the options for such a forgery is manipulation with the time of the start of the German attack. They say that it was not at all committed without a declaration of war, as Soviet propaganda told us - on the contrary, the war was declared by the Germans *before the attack*, which

was accompanied by the presentation of the corresponding note, and this happened at

three o'clock in the morning. The trouble is that three hours Berlin time is four hours Moscow time. And the war, as we know at least from a folk song, began "on the twenty-second of June, exactly at four o'clock." In fact, in many parts of the border, the Germans opened fire even earlier, air raids on the cities of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania began at 3:30, and on Sevastopol - already at 3:15. Another common argument of the revisionists is the number of Soviet citizens who went to serve to the occupiers. Their number is estimated by various sources at 700 thousand, a million and even one and a half million. However, most of these people were the so-called "Khivi" - "voluntary assistants" who worked in the rear of the Wehrmacht for a piece of bread. The alternative to this was usually death in a concentration camp. As the hero of Vysotsky sang in the movie "The Only Road":

We were offered a way out of the
war, But here's the price they
broke: We are sentenced to a
long life Through guilt, through shame,
through treason. Do you remember Sholokhov's "The Fate of a
Man" - both the book and the film? And there the hero serves as a
"voluntary assistant" for the Germans. Did the official Soviet culture pay
too much attention to the fate of those who, it seems, should have been

unconditionally considered a traitor? If we take into account only those who took up arms, then the number of traitors will become much less. And most of them will be in the Baltics and Western Ukraine - the regions where (let's admit it) there was a civil war. It is possible to condemn Estonians, Lithuanians or Western Ukrainians for serving the Nazis and complicity in crimes against humanity, but to accuse the enemies of the Soviet government of betraying this government is at least absurd. In general, if we recall the Asian theater of the Second World War, then in terms of the percentage of prisoners of war who went to serve the enemy, the British will confidently take the first place among the armies of the world - it was from its soldiers that the Japanese formed the Burma Liberation Army and the Indian Liberation Army (by the

Bose and Aung San are still revered in their countries as heroes in total). Although with the pro- be ahead of China the national collaborators will still Japanese government of Wang Jingwei in Nanking ... So, what conclusions have we come to? First, lying is not good. Secondly, incompetence in this or that issue is not a crime, but if this issue is within the scope of the historian's scientific interests, then it should be eliminated, because it interferes with an adequate analysis. Thirdly, any phenomenon should be considered in its own context and compared only with similar phenomena - otherwise scale aberrations are inevitable.

Fourthly, in addition to quantitative parameters, there are qualitative parameters, and often they play a much greater role than the payroll, length, thickness, caliber and speed. For miracles do not happen - it is impossible, having a weaker and technologically backward industry, to produce a larger quantity of products of equal quality. And finally, the main thing. It is necessary to clearly distinguish historical science from political journalism. Fortunately, the criteria that allow this to be done are quite simple: the historian, even having a certain political opinion, still strives to understand what happened - and the propagandist-agitator has long understood everything and wants only to prove to us that he is right. Alas, we live in an imperfect world, where the history of past decades still serves (and will serve for a long time) not so much as a lesson as an argument in political disputes. But let us finally work to ensure that history ceases to be an uncomplaining servant of politics!

notes

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64

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65

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103

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106

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108

L. Lopukhovsky. Vyazemskaya catastrophe of the 41st year. Moscow: Eksmo; Yauza, 2007.

109

The English howitzer "Midvale" Mark VI of the 1916 model in the stowed position weighed up to 9276 kg, the weight of the projectile was 90.7 kg, had a separate loading (that is, a projectile without a sleeve), a firing range of 9.6 km, a rate of fire of 2 shots per minute, calculation - 14 people. By November 1918, Vickers had produced 146 howitzers. In the Red Army, the Mark VI howitzer was considered a very valuable weapon, and they tried to modernize it several times. By November 1, 1936, there were 50 of them (and one training). They were in service until 1943.

110

Osadniks are settlers from the western and central regions of Poland. They received large plots of land, loans and various kinds of privileges and were the backbone of the Polish regime, established as a result of the unfortunate outcome of the 1920 war for us.

111

Lieutenant Isachenko, who had caused so much trouble to the authorities before the war, was appointed battery commander during the fighting. He turned out to be one of those who did not lose his head in the hopeless situation of encirclement near Vyazma.

112

Lopukhovsky Nikolai Ilyich, born in 1895 Gorki of the Vladimir province, participant in the First World War (from 1915 to 12/1/1917), a gunner of the fortress artillery, then a non-commissioned officer, after the February Revolution - a member of the regimental committee. During the Civil War, he took part in the battles against Denikin, Wrangel and Makhno, was awarded the RVS of the Southern Front with a nominal weapon - a pistol, and in 1938 - the anniversary medal "XX Years of the Red Army".

113

The regiment consisted (according to the state / available): 2866/2795 people, including command staff - 192/178, junior command staff - 546/531, enlisted personnel - 2128/2086. The armament consisted of: 24 203-mm howitzers (36 - according to the deployment scheme), vehicles - 296/225 (cars - 6, trucks - 189, special - 30), tractors - 165/9, tractor trailers - 150/75.

114

On November 1, 1940, the regiment numbered: 2886 people (including command personnel - 167, junior command personnel - 214, privates - 2505), 285 vehicles: cars - 7, trucks - 262, special - 16, tractors - 67, trailers - 4, rifles - 1870, revolvers - 396, light machine guns - 2. 203-mm howitzers - 24, radio stations - 29, kitchens - 18.

115

In 1954, on official business, I ended up in Wünsdorf, where the headquarters of the GSOVG was located. He was walking down the street and suddenly noticed that he was alone - all the officers who were heading to the headquarters suddenly disappeared somewhere. It turned out that the commander of the group of troops, Chuikov, was galloping towards me on a stallion, giving me a menacing look.

116

On March 1, 1940, there were 142 B-4 howitzers on the Finnish front, of which 4 were lost and out of order.

117

The ML-20 howitzer of the 1937 model had a weight of 7270 kg, a projectile weight of 43.6 kg, a maximum firing range of 17.4 km, a rate of fire of 3–4 rounds per minute,

118

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2681. L. 44, v. 6.

119

The main data of the howitzer B-4 guns: mass in combat position - 17.7 tons, in the stowed position - 19 tons, projectile weight - 100 kg, firing range - 17.89 km, rate of fire - 1 shot per 2 minutes, calculation - 15 Human.

120

TsAMO RF. F. 318 gap. Op.196518. D. 1. L. 67.

121

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2552. D. 32. L. 1, 3.

122

In short: operational readiness No. 3 - corresponds to the state of peacetime; No. 2 - vacations are prohibited (shore leave is allowed), measures are taken to ensure, if necessary, a quick transition to readiness No. 1 - full readiness, when everyone is in their places (posts), the fleet forces are ready to perform their tasks.

123

TsAMO RF. F. 353. Op. 5908. D. 1. L. 1, 51.

124

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2513. D. 71. L. 69. There is a note:
“Sent 2:25–02:35.”

125

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2513. D. 71. L. 76.

126

The 3rd Panzer Division had tanks: 59 Pz.II with a 20-mm cannon (58 of them in the 6th tank division, 1 in the division); 110 Pz.HI (of which 29 with a 37 mm cannon and 81 with a 50 mm short-barreled gun); 32 Pz.IV tanks (with a 75 mm short-barreled gun); as well as 13 sappers (based on Pz.I) and 15 commanders in the regiment, in total according to the list - 229. In the 4th TD - 44 Pz.II (with a 20-mm cannon); 110 Pz.HI (of which 31 with a 37 mm cannon and 74 with a 50 mm short-barreled gun); 20 Pz.IV tanks (with a 75-mm short-barreled gun); as well as 10 sappers (based on Pz.I) and 8 commanders in the regiment, in total according to the list - 212: Thus, in the 24th motorized corps of the 2nd tank group of G. Guderian there were 441 tanks.

127

CA MO RF. F. 132a. Op. 2642. D. 41. LI. 12.

128

CA MO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 22. L. 4.

129

TsAMO RF. F. 48a. Op. 1554. D. 90. LI. 260–262.

130

A clear exaggeration: from Kosovo to the training ground in a straight line 50 km, on the roads - 80 ..

131

AA Korobkov was arrested on July 9 and sentenced on July 22
Military tribunal to be shot.

132

Now Art. Bronnaya Gora (10 km south-west of Kossovo Poleskoye station). The stationary ammunition depot with an extensive network of railway access roads (head warehouse No. 1483 and district one: No. 843), the protection of which was entrusted to the regiment in June 1941, was located two kilometers north of the station.

133

Klich Nikolai Aleksandrovich (1895 - 10/16/1941), was arrested on July 8, 1941 and in October of the same year (according to other sources - September 27) was shot. There is no information about the place of burial. Posthumously rehabilitated.

134

The full text of the commander of the 120th Gap b / m RGK is given in the Appendix.

135

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2522. D. 86. L. 95

136

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 12. L. 146..

137

Among them were: 152-mm howitzers mod. 1909/30 (the Germans were assigned an index - 15.2 cm 8.R.N.445 (g) (the letter "g" meant - Russian), 152-mm howitzers M-10 mod. 1938 (15.2 cm 8.ÿ.ÿ.443(g)), 152 mm howitzer-gun ML-20 model 1937 (the Germans called them cannon howitzer 15.2 st KN.433/1(g)) and 152-mm guns model 1910/34 (15.2 cm ÿ.433/2(g)).

138

M. V. Loifer, before leaving for permanent residence in Israel, gave me some personal documents signed by the chief of staff of the 120th Gap, part of his front-line notebook with notes, which he made almost daily in 1940-1941, and memories of the first days wars based on these records.

139

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2511. D. 84. L. 37.

140

45th Infantry Division, AAR.

141

TsAMO RF. F. 929. On. 1. D. 3. L. 1

142

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2552. D. 1. L. 1–5, 50.

143

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2552. D. 10. L. 10.

144

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2540. D. 956. L. 121.

145

The weight of the gun in combat position exceeded 8 tons, the angle horizontal aiming - only 4 degrees in each direction.

146

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 10.

147

TsAMO RF. F. 500. Op. 12462. D. 594. LI. 5–8. (Order on the combat use of the 800th Special Purpose Training Regiment Brandenburg. Translated from German.)

148

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 9.10.

149

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2511. D. 5. L. 13–14.

150

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 10.

151

According to official data, the city of Slutsk was captured by the enemy on June 26, 1941.

152

Major General M. G. Khatskilevich - commander of the 6th mechanized corps,
Major General P.N. Akhlyustin - commander of the 13th mechanized corps

153

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 7.

154

TsAMO RF. F. 929. Op. 1.D. AND.

155

TsAMO RF. F. 929. On. 1. D. 5. L. 3, 5, 6. The detachment was supported by the 462nd cap (8 152-mm guns, 140 shells), the 420th gap (8 152-mm guns, 240 shells), the 318th gap b / m RGK (4 203-mm howitzers, 40 shells).

156

TsAMO RF. F. 929. On. 1. D. 5. L. 1-22.

157

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2511. D. 5. L. 25.

158

TsAMO RF. F. 929. On. 1. D. 1. L. 26.

159

From June 22 to July 9, the irretrievable losses of the 6th TP of the 3rd TD amounted to 45 tanks (including 13 Pz.II, 24 Pz.HI, 8 Pz.IV) or 23% of its original composition. In addition, on July 9, 9 tanks (2 Pz.II and 7 Pz.HI) were sent for repairs (27% of the number directly involved in the battle). The losses do not include command and sapper tanks, as well as attached flamethrower tanks. 145 tanks remained in service (43 Pz.II, 78 Pz.HI and 24 Pz.IV).

160

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 12. L. 83.

161

There. F. 208. Op. 2540. D. 2. L. 30.

162

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 7.8.

163

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 98.99.

164

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2579. D. 24. L. 83;. D. 16. L. 11.

165

Report No. 01/24 dated 07/24/41, Sukhinichi, entry. 0363 dated 07/27/41
(Headquarters Foundation. On. 11458. D. 27. LI. 323-326).

166

TsAMO RF. F. 318. He. 4631. D. 32. L. 20.

167

TsAMO RF. F. 8. Op. 725588. D.36. LI. 1,40,41.

168

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2522. D. 80-A. L. 35–55.

169

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2579. D. 1. L. 44.

170

TsAMO RF: F. 208. Op. 2522. D. 80A. LI. 36–53. The complete staff list of the commanding staff of the regiment as of 1.08.1941 (total 175 people).

171

TsAMO RF. F. 208. Op. 2540. D. 2. L. 14.

172

He wrote to his wife that he was slightly wounded in the shoulder and would lie in the hospital for 5-7 days. But in 1991, according to the documents of the medical archive, I established that he was wounded in the neck, and he was urgently evacuated by plane to Vyazma. He was treated for a whole month.

173

The letter was published in the collection Letters from the Front, Volume 1 (1941). M.: 1991.

174

TsAMO RF. F. ResF. Op. 4593ss. D. 5. L. 172

175

TsAMO RF. F. 318. Op. 4631. D. 31. L. 9.10. Spelling and style documents are saved.

Stalin and Kaganovich. Correspondence. 1931–1936 Moscow, 2001, p. 545.

177

New World, No. 12, 1994.

178

See V. Doroshenko, I. Pavlova, R. Raak. Not a myth: Stalin's speech on August 19, 1939 // Truth of Viktor Suvorov. Rewriting the history of World War II, M., 2006.

Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Teil 1, Band 9, München 1998,
pp. 377–379.

180

Ibid, p. 359.

181

Ibid, p. 371.

182

See: Oleg Ken. Mobilization planning and political solutions. Late 1920s - mid 1930s. St. Petersburg, 2002.

183

John Skott, "Jenseits von Ural", Stockholm 1944, 1944, S.12.

184

Rudolf Wolters, Spezialist in Sibirien, Berlin 1933.

185

Cit. By: Alexander Gogun. Black PR of Adolf Hitler. M., 2004, p. 61.

186

Ibid., p.71.

187

Ibid, 64.

188

There.

189

There.

190

Ibid., p.66

191

Ibid, p. 71.

192

Ibid., p.69.

193

Ibid., p.61.

For more details, see: P. 3. Case. Stalin's speech, which was not // Domestic History, 2004, No. 1, p. 113–139.

195

Thus, strike aircraft of the Black Sea Fleet from June 23 to July 1 made a total of 149 sorties (Combat Chronicle of the Navy. 1941-1942. M.: Voenizdat, 1992. P. 337-338.) The first use of strike aircraft by the Red Banner Baltic Air Force fleet refers to 25 June.

196

But from the Baltic to the Arctic Ocean, the terrain conditions were much worse - which was the main reason for the difficulties of the Soviet troops in the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-1940.

197

The rear of the Soviet armed forces in the Great Patriotic War.

Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1977. Pp. 52–53.

198

Sometimes the Su-2 and Yak-2/4 (BB-22), which began production in 1939-1940, are included in the "new models". The first of these was an attempt to create a cheap universal short-range aircraft, the second was a prestigious project of the aircraft designer Yakovlev, created for record performance, and not for combat use. Both vehicles had an insufficient bomb load and too weak small arms (and the BB-22 also turned out to be unreasonably expensive), so they were discontinued at the beginning of the war.

199

V. I. Alekseenko. Soviet Air Force on the eve and during the Great Patriotic war //Aviation and cosmonautics. No. 2/2000.

200

Although it is known that in 1943 a Soviet tank for the national budget of the USSR cost about three times less than a German tank for the German budget. See Appendix II in the book: The Battle of Kursk for details. Moscow: ACT, 2006, pp. 782–785.

M. Yu. Mukhin. Aviation industry of the USSR in 1921-1941.
M.: Nauka, 2006. Pp. 281.

Aircraft building in the USSR. 1917–1945 Book II. M.: TsAGI
Publishing Department, 1994. Pp. 226.

203

German industry during the war 1939–1945. Translation from German. M.: Publishing house of foreign literature, 1956. Pp. 232. It must be borne in mind that the German authors of this work clearly sought to underestimate the scale of military production in Germany. So, in general, they had only 11 million people employed in industry in 1939 out of the 80 million population of the Reich (together with Austria and the Sudetenland) - despite the fact that the labor force in Germany on May 31, 1939, there were 39.5 million people (p. . 50).

204

"Top secret! For command only! The strategy of Nazi Germany in the war against the USSR. Documents and materials. M.: Nauka, 1967. P. 729.

M. Yu. Mukhin. Aviation industry of the USSR in 1921-1941,
pp. 298, 300.

German Industry During the War 1939–1945, p. 42.

See, for example: K. Knorr. The military potential of states. Translation from English. M.: Military Publishing House, 1960. Pp. 65.

208

A part of the twin-turret T-26s had a 37-mm cannon - but by 1941 the shells for it had already been discontinued.

J. Forti. German armored vehicles in the Second world war, M., 2002, p.159.

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For a summary table on the presence of tanks in the Red Army on June 1, 1941, see, for example: A. G. Solyankin. M. V. Pavlov, I. V. Pavlov, I. G. Zheltov. Domestic armored vehicles. XX century. Volume 1. 1941–1945. M.: Exprint Publishing Center, 2005. Pp. 8.